

CANDID SUGGESTIONS;

I N

EIGHT LETTERS

T O

SOAME JENYNS, ESQ;

On the respective Subjects of his

DISQUISITIONS;

LATELY PUBLISHED:

With some Remarks on the Answerer of his
Seventh Disquisition,

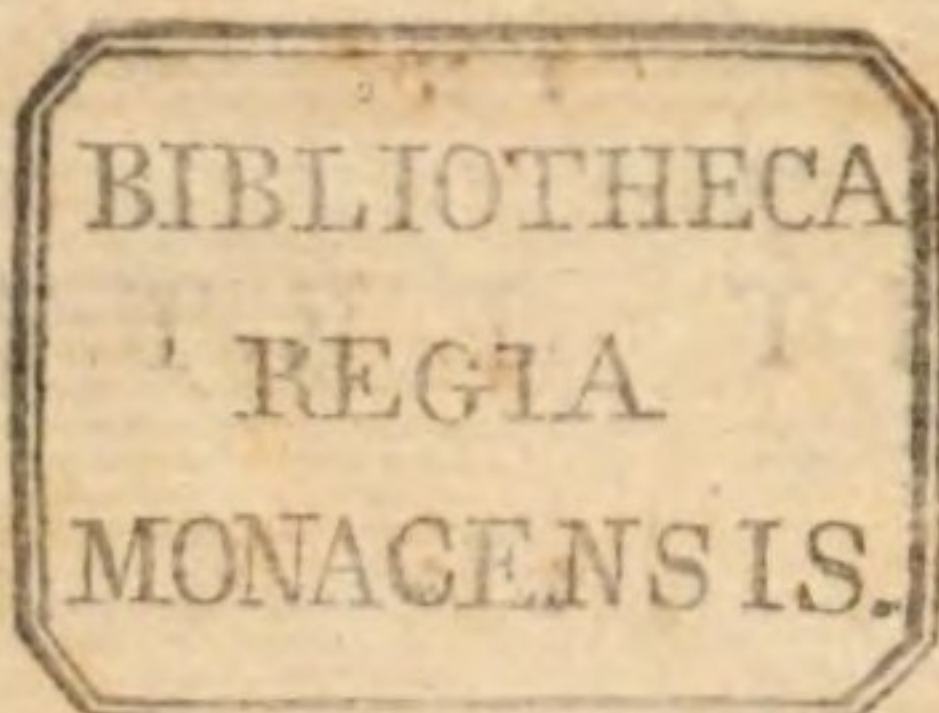
Respecting the Principles of MR. LOCKE.

By B. N. TURNER, M. A.

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L E T T E R S, &c.

L E T T E R I.

TO SOAME JENYNS, ESQ.

On his Disquisition respecting "The
Chain of Universal Being."

S I R,

I Shall not, I hope, be thought to
argue unfairly in the very outset
of my address to you, if I produce
the circumstance of my having
commented on your Disquisitions,
as a sufficient proof, that I look
B upon

upon them as having a considerable degree of merit; nor do I by any means meditate an attempt to rival you in fine writing, it being my utmost ambition, that I may be able to rise as much above you in sound argument, as I shall fall beneath you in brilliancy of wit, and elegance of expression. It may be observed however, that if an answerer has some advantage in respect to argument, he labours under difficulties in point of style; he will frequently be under a necessity of stating, and abridging his author's meaning first, and giving his own afterwards in the same period, which will not be very favourable to precision, or polish.

That

That no general* answer has hitherto appeared to a work so full of questionable matter, and comprehending subjects, some of which are of extreme importance, is a circumstance I did not expect: by this however I am the more encouraged to give the following observations to the public eye, and shall be happy if they meet with a reception at all answerable to the intention with which they were written; --- nor am I without hopes, since candour is the companion of genius, that even you yourself, Sir, will thank me for pointing out *some* errors, of the nature and tendency

B 2

of

* There has been an Answer published to the seventh Disquisition, which shall be noticed in it's proper place.

of which, I am persuaded, you was not aware.

As to your first Disquisition, "On the Chain of universal Being" this is not one of those which drew forth the present critical animadversions, but on the contrary, it is one in which there is little to be censured, and much to be admired. *O si sic omnia!* --- How far any of the rest deserve a similar compliment will be seen in the following critiques.

Your exordium is indeed worthy of that religion in which you profess yourself to be a believer. --- "The farther we enquire into the works of our great creator," you say "the more evident marks we shall discover of his infinite wisdom and power" and

and here the reader will agree with me, that wherever, in the subsequent parts of your work, you have deviated from this leading principle, you will at least have rendered your own conclusions extremely questionable. "This," you say, "is in nothing more conspicuous, than in that wonderful chain of beings, with which this terrestrial globe is furnished; rising above each other, from the senseless clod, to the brightest genius of human kind."

There is undoubtedly a chain of universal being, which, like the golden chain let down from the footstool of Jove, encircles all nature in it's mystical embrace. By this all beings whether animate or inanimate, are bound, or connected

ned together into one grand universal system; and by this the globe itself, nay all other perceptible, or imperceptible worlds, are harmonized with each other, and supported like meteors in the unfathomable abyfs.

Thus then, Sir, as a poet, you would have done well to call this a “*Chain* of universal Being”, tho’, as a Philosopher, you had better perhaps have called it a *Scale*, or *Gradation*; and you immediately feel the inconvenience of not attending to this distinction, where you say that the “*links* are so fine as to be quite imperceptible to our eyes,” which word *links*, you are obliged to explain to mean the *boundaries* of those qualities which form this *chain* of

of subordination --- This therefore makes rather a jumble of metaphors which might have been avoided. "The boundaries of these qualities," are "indeed, so blended together, and shaded off into each other, that where one ends, and the other begins we are unable to discover:" this you compare to a painter's colouring, tho', as a natural effect, it would, perhaps, have been better illustrated by the beautiful intermixture of the tints in the celestial bow.

That mankind partake, in some cases, of the instinct of brutes, which is the class immediately below them, is evident, but your elucidation of this subject is not, I think, quite correct. You say
that

that "it is by instinct, with the concurrence of reason, that we are taught the belief of a God, and of a future state: " It is true indeed, that we sometimes borrow the word *instinct* to mean an universal, or, if I may so say, a connate idea of the Deity, but this must surely be something very different from that blind impulse we observe in the brute creation.

Your next stroke is what would rather become the wit, or the satirist, than the philosopher. War, you say, is the effect of brutal instinct in contradiction to reason, for by this man " hastens to his own destruction, like the herring, and the mackarel, for the public benefit, which he neither understands,

stands, nor cares for." On the horrors of war we have no occasion at present to expatiate; nor need we deny, that many enter into the military profession, as they do into other employments, without thoroughly weighing them in the impartial scale of reason; but if war in general be thro' cruel necessity conducive, as you say, to the *public benefit*, why is the undertaking of it in no case consonant to reason? and why must the hero be supposed to hazard, or lay down his life for what he neither understands, nor cares for?

To account for this martial propensity in human nature, we need not confine ourselves entirely to the love of country, nor even to self-
C defence

defence, (which is surely no irrational principle,) since, by a slight inspection of the volume of nature, without having read either Mr. Hobbes, or Lord Kaims, or *Alexander Ross* over, we may rest satisfied, that there are allurements enow in ambition, pride, or profit, to recruit the ranks when necessary in any nation not given up to sloth and effeminacy. †

That we have also in this case an instinct, similar to that of the brutes, in their contests for love, or food, or

† The meanest soldier has his motive, tho' not perhaps a very refined one. A veteran, in the reign of Charles II. being asked whether he had fought for the King or the Parliament, replied, "God bless your honour, I fought for eight-pence a day."

or superiority, (if this indeed can be called instinct) may very readily be granted, but that they who go to war are like the herring, and the mackarel, will scarcely be allowed, unless we should attribute to these the rationality, and free will of Juvenal's rhombus, who was inspired with a laudable ambition of being eaten by the emperor.

Your general plan however in this Disquisition is ingenious, and proper. You accurately, and elegantly observe that each class of beings partakes of the characteristic properties of *all* beneath it ; as for instance, man has, besides his own proper reason, the instinct of animals, the vegetation of plants, and the solidity of matter. In this sense

indeed all nature is bound together as by a chain, and this you justly produce as an instance of the divine wisdom, in not having jumbled together a mass of heterogeneous natures, since “by granting some *additional* quality to each superior order in conjunction with *all* those possessed by their inferiors,” he has constituted throughout the whole a beautiful system of subordination. And here you have almost, tho’ not very distinctly, noticed another peculiarity, which I find it necessary to bring forwards; and that is, that each order of beings does not partake of the qualities of all the orders above itself, as it does of those beneath, but only of the qualities of that order which
is

is contiguous, or immediately above it, thus a stone partakes only of the vegetation of plants, without either instinct, or reason.

Thus we have a facilis descensus through all the lower classes of our kindred creatures, but to ascend by the same means to superior Beings, will be found a work much more arduous and uncertain. “Here” as you at first rightly observe, “we *must stop*, being unable to pursue the progress of this astonishing chain beyond the limits of this terrestrial globe, with the naked eye,” and yet, it seems, you are very unwilling to stop here, and still fancy that “thro’ the perspective of analogy” you can discern this scale of Beings ascending even into heaven,
like

like Jacob's ladder, with an order of angelic natures on every round ; for " by a like *easy transition* " you say " the lowest of their orders may be united with the highest of our own, in whom, to reason may be added intuitive knowledge, insight into futurity, &c. till we ascend by almost infinite gradations to those most exalted of created Beings who are seated on the footstool of the celestial throne. " Now, not to enter on an enquiry about the decency, or propriety of our indulging such speculations as these, what I chiefly wish to shew you, is, that your *transition* is not quite so *easy*, nor your analogy so just, as you seem to apprehend, for however flattering it may be to humanity to connect itself

with

with angelical natures, and however we may boast of a *divinæ particula auræ*, yet there is one circumstance in the above process, which seems, in a great measure, to check our hopes. Each order of Beings, as we have seen, partakes of the characteristic qualities of that which is immediately above it, but then, it partakes of the qualities of *all* the orders beneath itself. If then we should dare to suppose, (what cannot be ascertained) that we have any thing in common with angelical natures, or, that the lowest class of them has any intelligence so low as human reason, yet, to complete the analogy, we must carry this matter far beyond any possibility of belief; for we must suppose

suppose such superior Beings to be endowed with the characteristic properties, not only of man, but of all the other classes inferior to him, such as instinct, vegetation, and solidity.

Thus is the reasoning pride of man for ever check'd in all its attempts to penetrate into that state of things, to the perception of which its powers are by no means adapted; and this consideration may afford an additional argument against the above analogy, for why should angels be supposed to have a kind of reason, which considered in this light, would probably be of no use to them?

The consequence indeed can be nothing but *confusion*, whenever we
attempt

attempt to erect a scientific Babel, for the purpose of prying into the unfearchable mysteries of heavenly things. Here, I say, we ought certainly to stop short, and not indulge too far an arrogant and presumptuous career of speculation in things of which religion only, and not reason, is capable of informing us. Since then we fail in establishing this analogy, it may serve to teach us, that we have from our own nature no solid claim to an affinity with superior beings, nor any inherent and natural right in ourselves to eternal life: whence we may have a clearer perception of the truth of that very significant declaration, that *life and immortality are brought to light thro' the Gospel.**

* II. Tim. 1, 10.

L E T T E R II.

T O T H E S A M E.

On his Disquisition respecting “ Cruelty
to inferior Animals.”

S I R,

FROM theory you now take
a step into practice, and, after
proving our affinity to inferior
animals, you naturally pass on to
the consideration of an offence,
which that affinity certainly renders
more heinous. To plead the cause
of injured innocence, whether in
fur, or in feathers, whether on
two legs or four, argues a generous
and noble mind: this then is a
subject

subject, as worthy of the pen of a Jenyns, as of the pencil of an Hogarth.

From a supposition, that *we* are equally obnoxious to the will of superior beings, you properly recommend mercy to such as are inferior; and, we may add that, whatever becomes of your natural analogy, yet, we *may* acquire a moral likeness to heavenly beings, by extending mercy; while, on the other hand, we *must* contract a similitude to infernal ones, by exercising cruelty.

You regret the horrid deviations from the benevolent intentions of our maker, to which we are daily witnesses. “Many derive their chief amusement from the deaths

and sufferings of inferior animals, and still more look upon them only as instruments of wood, or iron," of both which you give the following facetious illustration ---

"The carman drives his horse, and the carpenter his nail, by repeated blows, and so long as they both go, they never reflect whether either of them have any sense of feeling" and "the butcher plunges his knife into the throat of an innocent lamb, with as little reluctance, as the taylor sticks his needle into the collar of a coat."

By this then, I suppose, we are to understand that the carman regards his horse as an instrument of wood or iron, and that the butcher's *chief amusement* consists in

in killing a lamb. Some pages afterwards indeed you grant the necessity there is for the profession of the latter, with this proper, and excellent proviso, that “so disagreeable an office should be performed with the utmost tenderness and compassion, and such executions be made quick and easy as possible.” The course of nature requires, and the divine behest permits us to kill what is necessary for our food; but you are much to be commended for censuring those, if such there be, who can submit to a monstrous kind of cookery, in having their meat slaughtered, by slow, and cruel methods, “for the gratification of their depraved and unnatural appetites.”

In

In the instances above produced there is, I fear, too much reason for reproof. The lower ranks of people, in this country, are not famous for delicacy of feeling; and an habitual exercise of cruelty has so natural a tendency to harden the heart, that the latter description of men here spoken of, are excluded, by our laws, from serving on juries. That the dray-horse is often treated with much barbarity, is notorious, and, I fear, the calf undergoes a lingering death, for the sake of some fancied improvement in the meat. To restrain such abuses, in a civilized and Christian country, ought I should think to be a principal object of the magistrate's attention.

Next

Next come on to be tried, two separate causes, in which the dog, and horse are plaintiffs; and, I hear them pleading, by their eloquent counsel, the one, “that, notwithstanding his social, and friendly qualities, he must be hanged without remorse, if, by barking, to defend his master’s person, and property, he happens unknowingly to disturb his rest” and the other, “that after a life of generous and painful services, when worn down with age and infirmities, he is condemned to end his days by being miserably whipped in a dust-cart, or a hackney-coach” In the first case however it appearing, that the dog had been incorrigibly noisy, and, by reiteration

tion of his cries, had rendered them useless, like the boy and false alarms, his plea was not admitted. In the second instance, defendant man was severely censured for want of feeling, and gratitude, though the court was of opinion, that in consideration of the horse's age and infirmities, the unexpected stroke of a bullet, might perhaps have been rather a mercy than a cruelty.

In some of your subsequent trials, as, for instance, those respecting cock - fighting, bull - baiting, &c. we shall not disagree, since I am retained on the same side as yourself. But, to drop my metaphor, "the sluggish bear," you say, "in contradiction to his nature, is taught

taught to dance, for the diversion of a malignant mob, by placing red-hot irons under his feet” and, I believe you might have added, by putting out his eyes. Scarcely less, I apprehend, is the cruelty exercised on dogs, and horses, in teaching them to tell fortunes, or play at cards; with many other instances of folly and barbarity, which, as you observe, “are committed without censure, and even without observation; but, we may be assured, that they cannot finally pass away unnoticed, and unretaliated.” †

E

You

† Your creed, or system, throughout this Disquisition, like that of Dantè in his Inferno, seems to be, that there will be
an

You acknowledge, that, “the laws of self defence, justify us in destroying those animals who would destroy us, who injure our properties, or annoy our persons.” This, however, you observe, will not hold good, in case they are not, at the time, in a capacity to hurt us; but the instances you have produced of this are such as made me, I own, both smile and wonder. “We have no right,” it seems, “to shoot a bear on an *inaccessible* island of ice, or an eagle on the mountain’s top.”

an exact and literal *retaliation* in a future state, of the sufferings inflicted here, though you do not specify whether this is to be effected by the agency of such animals as are now the sufferers.

Now

Now, as to the first case, since you have conducted your bear to so strange and inhospitable a coast, I cannot but think it would have been an instance of humanity in you, if you could somehow have contrived to conduct the gunner after him ; and, as to the second, why the eagle should be no longer capable of annoying us, because he is on the mountain's top, is, what I do not very readily comprehend.

Here, Sir, for the first time, you mention your favorite topic, "the origin of evil," with which, you frequently afterwards attempt to work wonders ; and this, you only hint, at present, as an introduction to an idea, which may

E 2

have

have some truth in it, and that is, "that the nearer man approaches to a state of nature, the more predominant is his disposition to cruelty, and the more violently it operates." This propensity, however, I fear, is not confined to those only, who approach a state of nature. Savages are indeed what their name imports, and the common people delight in cruel amusements; but is there no savageness amongst well bred people? Is there no such thing as scandal and detraction, by which many, with the most perfect politeness, and complacency, can destroy the fortune, the peace of mind, or, even the life of a neighbour, or benefactor, and then thank God that they

they are not like the Miamis, who, sacrifice their prisoners by deliberate tortures ; nor, like Smithfield drivers, who harrafs their cattle till they are worked up to madness ?

Not contented with savages, and the *canaille*, you next introduce children to be sacrificed on the altar of systematic philosophy --- a fiery trial, which, I hope, they will pass through with much more safety, than they did through that of Moloch. “ Children, ” you say, “ approach a state of nature, and, therefore, delight in cruelty.” Now, in the first place, I cannot see why they approach a state of nature at all, since the first things they imbibe are the manners of their parents. This
state

state indeed is in itself equivocal, and indeterminate: we have heard of a poetical, or Arcadian state of nature, the Saturnian age of innocence, and simplicity, to which our tender years must surely bear a nearer resemblance, than to a state of brutal and ferocious manners. But, secondly, if children sometimes seem to delight in giving misery, this proceeds rather from ignorance, than a love of cruelty: if they confine an insect in a box, or transfix it to see it spin, it is owing to their being unconscious of the pain they give; and, to such a practice, when properly explained, few of them, I hope, would ever return. Some children, no doubt, are born with vicious dis-

dispositions ; but, if cruelty begins with infancy, it will, most probably, increase with years, and the man will be more savage than the child. However, that the dispositions of children in general, are, comparatively speaking, tender, virtuous, and beneficent, is what we have the highest authority to declare.---*For of such is the kingdom of Heaven.**

But, above all the rest, the sportsman feels the whole weight of your accumulated indignation, who “ views with delight the trembling deer, and defenceless hare, flying for hours in the utmost agonies of horror and despair, and at last,

* Mat. xix, 14.

sinking

sinking under fatigue, devoured by their merciless pursuers ; --- or sees with joy the beautiful pheasant, and harmless partridge drop from their flight, weltering in their blood, or perhaps perishing with wounds and hunger, under the cover of some friendly thicket, to which they have in vain retreated for safety." Here, Sir, you are strangely mistaken ; nothing provokes a sportsman more than not to be able to recover his wounded game ; nor does his pleasure, I believe, arise, in any degree, from the pain experienced by the trembling fugitives, but from his own skill, the sagacity, or fleetness of his dogs, &c. and, amidst the sympathy we feel on
this

this occasion, we may reflect, that the animals so destroyed were not intended to sink under disease, or old age, or be dissolved by an unprofitable corruption. There is one practice indeed, for which reason check'd by horror, dares scarcely aim at an apology, and that is fishing with a hook. I do not mean to say that the angler *delights* in giving tortures, but I wish he would be more careful either to prevent, or to shorten them.

What seems to distress you most is the cruelty of the sportsman, in “sparing neither labour nor expence to preserve, and propagate these innocent animals *for no other end*, but to multiply the objects of his persecution.” As

F

well

well, I should think, might the grazier be condemned for encreasing his breed of cattle, merely to multiply objects for the cruelty of the butcher; and indeed since all men are born to misery, what shall we say of the statesman, who is so merciless and unfeeling as to encourage population? †

For the sportsman you can find no better comparison than that of “a superior (infernal) Being, whose whole endeavours were employed, and whose whole pleasure consisted in terrifying, ensnaring, tormenting, and

† A female historian being congratulated on the happy progress of her pregnancy, replied, “Alas! what pleasure can it be to bring forth a child into a *land of slavery?*”

and destroying mankind," and "we must acknowledge," you say, "that with regard to inferior animals, just such a Being is a sportsman."

Upon the whole, I am happy to declare, that this Disquisition is ingenious, and the object of it extremely laudable, and I heartily wish that the moralist, the satirist, and the preacher would unite their efforts to discourage a practice, which, tho' not in the particular instance of the sportsman, yet does in many cases debase mankind to a level even with fiends:---they should however be careful not to blunt the edge of their reproofs by producing wrong or trivial examples. It is with pleasure that I embrace this opportunity of paying a just

compliment to an excellent novel by observing, that there is in the *Spiritual Quixote* a well-fancied, and well-supported character of a singular kind of knight-errant, who issues forth for the protection, and rescue of oppressed and injured animals. Tho' this laudable zeal may not perhaps be imitable in it's utmost extent, yet surely it becomes every gentleman, not only to set a proper example, but to exhort, reprove, or interfere on all proper occasions, in order to prevent, as much as possible, a crime so reproachful to humanity, and offensive to the common Father and Creator of all things.

L E T.

L E T T E R III.

T O T H E S A M E.

On his Disquisition respecting “ a Præ-
existent State.”

S I R,

IN pursuance of my plan I am
now led to a consideration of
your arguments in favour of a
præexistent state, it is not however
my intention, either altogether to
affirm, or deny the reality of the
state itself. This is, and still must
remain a matter of the greatest un-
certainty ; nor can I subscribe to the
censure you have thrown out against
our divines and metaphysicians, for
neg-

neglecting a subject, about which every thing that can be urged must be so very undecisive.

You set off with a most formidable list of authorities, "The Gymnosophists of Egypt, the Magi of Persia, the Brachmans of India, the greatest philosophers of Greece and Rome, and the fathers and primitive writers of the Christian church, have all adopted this doctrine." The wonder then seems to be that they have left no better arguments in it's support.

Your first species of proof is from reason; for though a male and female may produce a body, yet you think it impossible that they could produce an immortal soul to inhabit it. Now I must
own.

own, I cannot see why that Almighty Being who endued them with powers for one effect, might not, if he pleased, have endued them with powers for both. Supposing however, that the soul is not traducible, what then? Then "you say" when a body is produced there *must* be a præexistent soul ready to take possession of it "but if the soul be a distinct creation, I see no reason why it may not be created at that time as well as any other. Your idea however, seems to be, that it was created at no time at all, "for whatever has no end," you say "can never have had any beginning" whence it must follow that the soul must have been coeval with the Deity, so that the Deity would be

no

no longer the *first cause*, nor could he have created an immortal Being, since he would not have had the priority of existence necessary for that purpose.

Your mistake both here, and in the following Disquisition, proceeds from your not considering the different senses in which the word *eternity* may be understood. The eternity of the soul both had, and, as we have seen, must have had a beginning, though it has acquired this name from it's having no end: whereas the eternity, in which the Deity exists is compleat a parte ante, as well as a parte post, for we can ascribe no beginning to him who is self-existent, and the great First Cause of all things.

Your

Your second argument from reason is, That our present being is "a confused jumble of good and evil, happiness and misery, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, which is unintelligible, as well as inconsistent with the goodness of God, unless we take in the idea of a præexistent, as well as of a future state." --- The *happiness* there is in the world is not inconsistent with the goodness of God, and as to the *misery*, this may be sufficiently accounted for, from it's being a state of trial and probation, without any reference to former disobedience.

Your next argument is from the face of nature, or rather the state of man, and is very similar to the

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fore-

foregoing. Here, Sir, you exert all the powers of genius and oratory, in a display of human misery and wretchedness, tho' not without some degree of humour, which may release us from any apprehensions of your having had more than your share of what you so feelingly describe. The scene of horror you have here drawn, and which could scarcely be exceeded by the pencil of a Salvator Rosa, is supposed, by you, to be the effect of præexistent crimes. You do not indeed insist on this as the *sole* cause, for that would have run counter too violently both to reason and revelation, you therefore slightly, and en passant, introduce *probation* as a kind of collateral reason

reason. And yet the world is represented by you in the same page, both as a horrible dungeon, and a spacious, beautiful, and durable structure.

The above hypothesis, you think, is necessary for the justification of Providence, in permitting

Labour, and penury, the racks of pain,
Disease, and sorrow's weeping train;
together with all the horrors of
war, and those bitter ingredients in
the cup of social and domestic life,
such as "treachery, injustice, ingrati-
tude, ill-humour, perverseness &c."
Non tali auxilio --- if our patience,
as well as obedience, is to be tri-
ed, there must be sufferings--- but
are there no antidotes? are there
no such things as friendship, love,

honor, gratitude, affluence, learning, genius? --- or if, in spite of these, the worthy mind be bowed down with affliction, will not Providence supply contentment, fortitude, the applause of a good conscience, and hopes of that reward which is particularly promised to those that weep?

All evils may be divided into such as we bring upon ourselves, and such as we do not. Now neither of these, I apprehend, can be attributed to præexistent causes. The first class are such as apparently arise from our own misconduct, and as to the second sort, or incidental evils, such as the falling of the tower of Siloam, we are forbidden to ascribe them to antecedent crimes
in

in general, without any exception as to the case of a præexistent state. --- Besides we read much of the *external* prosperity of the wicked, and sufferings of the righteous in this present life, whence, on your supposition, it would seem to follow, that they who are the best men here must heretofore have been the worst, and vice versa; and thus, for our amusement, we might trace them alternately back through an hundred other præexistent states, for I see no necessity for our confining ourselves to one.

Once more, --- We may observe that the general ends of punishment are, either to work a reformation, or render satisfaction to offended justice; you seem to have adopted
both

both of them in the present case. But, if our reformation be intended by this punishment for præexistent crimes, why were they previously obliterated from our memory, which must rob the correction of it's due effect? or, if the satisfaction of justice was the object, why was not that justice made apparent, or why was not the punishment still further heightened by permitting a consciousness of former guilt?

Having dispatched *reason* and the *face of nature*, you now come to *revelation*, by which you say the present doctrine "is no less confirmed" Reason, as we have seen, may be a corrupt judge, and the appearance of things an unfaithful witness; but to revelation we must
neces-

necessarily bow, as to a perfect law, which, when rightly understood must be infallibly decisive. Here I must own I expected some better authority on your part, since there are passages in scripture which might be, and actually have been produced on the same side, though I do not find you have quoted any text on the occasion except one, which is nothing to the purpose, being plainly an exhortation to godly diligence, *work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*, nor do I see why this *salvation* must necessarily refer to a præexistent state, as if there were not crimes enow in the present.

Your whole argument then from revelation is founded on the doctrine

trine of original sin, for “we are constantly represented” you say, “in scripture, as coming into the world under a load of guilt, as condemned criminals, the children of wrath, and objects of divine indignation, which can be no otherwise accounted for than by supposing a præexistent state, in which men had incurred the divine displeasure.” This you triumphantly display as the grand desideratum, the happy clue by which you have at length been fortunately enabled to penetrate into the labyrinths of infinite wisdom, and to discover that it’s dispensations are a kind of abstract of the penal laws, consisting of either commitments, banishments, or executions for præexistent offences !

offences ! This surely is *rational Christianity* with a vengeance, and what I did not expect to meet with from Mr. Jenyns.

Still less does it become a defender of Christianity in it's mysterious sense, to say that "men are placed here in order to give them an opportunity of *expiating* this guilt by sufferings," "of *atoning* for their depravity by the usual sufferings of this life, and *working it off* by acts of positive obedience." This, I say, is not very consistent with the idea of their being at best unprofitable servants ; nor with the necessity of that redemption, which you have sometimes yourself very properly insisted on as the fundamental doctrine of Christianity.

H

With

With what satisfaction then does the mind return from such reveries to the consistent, though mysterious truths of the Gospel! in favour of which we might, I think, extract an additional argument from your present reasoning; for, if our sufferings were the effect of any anteval wickedness of our own, why might not we ourselves have been sufficient, and consequently permitted to atone for them? --- so that the redemption itself seems to indicate, that great part at least of our depravity has flowed from *man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, &c.* which, as it was not contracted, so it is reasonable to suppose it was not properly expiable by ourselves.

The

The very existence of evil, you think, necessarily implies, and presupposes a former state in which men had offended, for "if a man at the moment of his entrance into a new country was declared a criminal, it would surely be unnecessary to assert that he had lived in some other before he came there." Here your simile plainly begs the question. With respect to a man arriving in a new country, he is an adult, and therefore must have lived somewhere before; but with respect to a new born infant, this is the very thing to be proved. However, though the mysteries of the divine œconomy cannot always be illustrated by human occurrences, yet there is something in the

above similitude which seems capable of being explained with some advantage. --- A man arriving in a new country finds himself treated as a criminal, without the smallest consciousness of having incurred any guilt which could have occasioned such usage; how then shall we account for this, unless we suppose that the prince of the country is inclined to make trial of his patience, in order, if he approves of his behaviour, to promote him in future to the highest honours?

This doctrine however of a *præ-existent* state is, you say, the very *essence* of the Christian dispensation, and the grand principle in which it differs from the religion of nature. Here, Sir, you take for granted your
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having proved that this doctrine is to be found in Christianity, which is not quite so clear; but that you should deny it to be any part of the religion of nature is rather surprising, when we recollect that you set off with representing it as held by the Gymnosophists, the Magi, the Brachmans, and the Greek and Roman Philosophers, as well as plainly deducible from reason and the nature of things: — now I must own I know not who were the interpreters of natural religion, except the sages above-mentioned, nor in what volume they could read it, unless in the heart of man, and the face of nature.

Last of all, permit me to observe that what I must think the most
weighty

weighty and productive argument is still behind. Men in general are represented by you as compleatly miserable --- are you then aware --- I hope you are not --- that by your scheme, which almost entirely sets aside the necessity of a future state, you in the same degree deprive the sufferer of this world of his best, his only solid comfort, the hopes of immortality? “Was that man a lover of his race” says an ingenious traveller* speaking of Voltaire, “who deprived the afflicted of their most healing balm, and the aged of their greatest consolation? let the aged and afflicted answer the question --- Wherein lies the chief alleviation of their sufferings?”

* Mr. Sherlock.

ings ? is it not in religion ? " But a religion which refers back human sufferings, almost totally to præexistent offences, will in this respect, I fear, be little better than no religion at all.

Thus, Sir, have I taken a view of your arguments on this very curious subject, from all which I must beg leave to observe in conclusion, that, to me at least, you have made a præexistent state less credible than it was before---that, if it should be admitted at all, we are under no necessity of adopting your scheme for it's illustration, --- and lastly, that, if it ever did exist, it was most undoubtedly not eternal.

LET-

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

On his Disquisition respecting “ The
Nature of Time. ”

SIR,

HAVING thus with great
ingenuity

Describ'd our præexistent station
Before this vile terrene creation, †
you now very naturally and regularly *come down to Adam*, or enter upon a discussion of our *temporal* being; and, that you may not jog on in a vulgar track, you seem as

† Prior's Alma, Canto II.

desirous

desirous of demolishing Time, as you was before of establishing præ-existence. You are indeed one of the most extraordinary killers of time I ever met with, for you have employed it, like a suicide, to destroy itself; but since the sober and ordinary part of mankind are still apt to think, that time is not only real, but of the highest value, I shall endeavour, for their sakes, to save it from annihilation.

The three great points you here labour to establish seem to be---That *time* is nothing,---That *eternity* has no duration, and therefore is as good as nothing,---and yet, notwithstanding this new-discovered analogy, That *time* and *eternity* bear no manner of affinity, or relation

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to each other ! --- It may, at first sight, appear an easy task to refute self-refuted propositions, but, in fact, this is by no means the case, since they are generally so deeply intrenched in logic, or metaphysics, as to bid defiance to reason and argument, and indeed, as Bishop Warburton expresses it on another occasion, “ are the less liable to be approached for having no weak sides of common sense. ” † --- This long essay therefore, in which I am scarcely able to hunt up one single truth, might perhaps very safely have been left to the internal evidence of it's own futility, or consign'd over to the lash of your own just censure, in another place, *

† Triennial Charge, 1761. * Page 103.
where

where you say, "Some philosophers have ventured, in opposition to all men's senses, and even to their own, to deny the existence of matter, for no other reason but because they find in it properties which they are unable to account for."

How potent is the magic touch of philosophy! What worlds have vanished before it, like an enchanted forest, and left not a wreck behind! Our bodies, it seems, have been long since syllogized into nothing, and indeed we can scarcely *call our souls our own*. Space, I believe, is still extant, tho' under perpetual apprehensions of undergoing the same fate, and, like the brazen head of old, you have now pronounced the non-entity of time. --- *Quantum*

est in rebus inane! --- In the midst of this material, spiritual, and temporal annihilation may we not fear lest, ere long, the very *shadow* of things may be run away with, as the Devil is said to have run away with the Frenchman's, whose body was in consequence ever after transparent. † And here, by the way, I beg leave just to observe, that the

† There is somewhere an old story of a set of students in necromancy, who bargained with the devil, that in return for instructing them, he should have a right to seize on that student who came last out of the cave where they assembled. One moon-light night a Frenchman, happening to be last, recommended the Devil to the student behind him, pointing to his own shadow, which Satan accordingly ran away with and left him transparent.---Hence, possibly, the old saying, “ Devil take the hindmost.”

seems

great Berkley seems to have managed matters rather clumsily, since, after depriving the world of its *substance*, he has left its *shadow* unaccountably eclipsing the moon, without any density to occasion it.

Let us now examine into the *substance* of your reasoning on the present subject.--- “We are so apt,” you say, “to *mistake* a succession of thoughts and actions for time that it is impossible to separate, or distinguish them, and time abstracted from such actions is nothing.” Well then, --- call *time* a *succession of thoughts and actions* and then there is no *mistake* --- they are one and the same thing, so that there can be no separation, nor abstraction in the case. “Time is
only

only the mode in which some created Beings exist, but in itself has really no existence at all." *A corporeal* existence indeed it has not, any more than spirit has, but that is no reason why it may not have a kind of existence peculiar to itself. Strictly speaking, it is not *a mode*, but a *simple idea* gained by reflection, and having it's own modes. †

But supposing *time* and *space* to be the essential modes of the existence of body, then surely they must be *something*, otherwise there would be nothing for body to exist in ; and I must think it full as irrational to say that the world exists *in nothing*, as to say that it was made *by nothing* : and here I cannot but applaud your modesty in not taking away *space*

† Locke, Book II. C. 14.

as well as *time*: the same process, and the same trouble would have done for both, and then you might have adopted, and parodied the lover's wish,

Ye Gods, annihilate both space and time
To make one Sceptic famous!

Your appeal to the authority of the Atomic Philosophers and their Poet Lucretius, can be of little avail. This subject is allowedly abstruse and difficult, * but were it not so, yet when was there a delusion or a nonsense which had not some sect or other to defend, and patronize it?

The division of time, you say, into days, years, &c. is what gives it the *appearance* of something real. But surely it's being capable of being

* Locke, Book II. Chap. 14.

ing so divided is no bad proof that it *is* something real. Nor can I see the impropriety, which you suppose, in imagining time “to resemble a great book, one of whose pages is every day wrote [written] on, and the rest remain blank, to be filled up in their turns with the events of futurity.”

Your next stroke is at Eternity, which you say is a different mode of existence from time, to prove which you assert that the Supreme Being sees all things, past, present, and to come, not as we do *successively*, but at one view, and in one aggregated mass; and that since his ideas can have no succession, they can have no time, so that his existence, “if the expression may be allowed,

allowed you, is what you would call *perpetually instantaneous.*” You are certainly welcome, Sir, to your own expressions, but you will allow me to say with respect to this, That it it does not give me a more determinate idea than *light darknes, or cold heat.*

I am happy to find, that you yourself acknowledge the incomprehensible nature of eternity, for “of this ” you say “human reason can afford us no manner of conception.” If then we cannot judge of eternity, how much less can we judge of the great Author of this and all other existence, so as to reason about or determine the mode of his ideas! As to other Beings existing in eternity, we know that

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there are *things which the angels desire to look into*,* so that eternity may be very compatible with a limited and progressive knowledge, and consequently analogous to time.

But tho' we cannot argue rightly on the Divine Essence, we may be able to see what is amiss in *your* argument about it. "Eternity," you say, "is that mode of existence in which all events past, present, and to come, are seen at one view:" Now this may be a definition of *infinite knowledge*, but surely it is not so of *infinite duration*; and to deduce from hence that God has no succession of existence, is to employ *omniscience*, which is one of his attributes, to destroy *eternity*, which is another. The truth is

* 1 Peter, i, xii. that

that his essence is far above and beyond all modes, or manners of existence whatsoever, how then shall we presume so far to dogmatize on such a subject, as to say that his omniscience is incompatible with his eternal duration---that he, who allowedly has *all* knowledge, and exists in *all* space, should notwithstanding have nothing similar to time to exist in, or, to explain absurdity by nonsense, should exist in an *eternity* which is *perpetually instantaneous*!

Your next argument is one of which you seem very fond, “Eternity cannot be composed of finite parts, which, however multiplied, can never become infinite.” This however is but a sophism --- Whilst

finite parts indeed are multiplied in a finite or conceivable degree, they are not infinite, but tho' the mind, by it's own powers, is unable to conceive them infinitely multiplied, yet this is no proof but that they may be so, and thereby constitute eternity. Here, by the way, let me ask, What are finite parts of time? months, days, hours, &c. are arbitrary divisions, the creatures of fancy, and have in themselves no distinct essence, so that tho' time is real, and eternity an extension of it, yet to say that eternity is composed of finite parts of time seems not to be correct. On this subject however, Sir, we neither have, nor ought to have, distinct ideas, and much of your mistake, especially in

in the present Disquisition, would have been avoided, had you attended to that excellent argument of Mr. Locke, That finite reason is not capable of comprehending infinity, “ For whilst men, says he, talk and dispute of infinite space or duration as if they had as compleat and positive ideas of them as they have of a yard, or an hour, or any determinate quantity, it is no wonder if the incomprehensible nature of the thing they discourse of, or reason about, leads them into perplexities and contradictions, and their minds be overlaid by an object too large and mighty to be surveyed and managed by them.” *

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* Locke, B. II. Chap. 17.

There are however two passages in scripture which you think evidently imply duration without succession; *I am,** and *Before Abraham was I am* :† These are, Sir, inconceivably sublime ideas, suited to the subject, and not to be adequately expressed in any language, except that which seems providentially adapted to this sacred purpose. The latter may be an allusion to the former, and you do not seem to be aware that the tense here used in the Hebrew is capable of expressing this mysterious existence, which is at once both infinitely present, and infinitely extended. Thus, Sir, have you attempted to deprive the great JEHOVAH of that duration which his

* Exod. iv. 14. † John viii. 58.

very name so emphatically imports, and to reduce to a sort of mathematical point of time, the existence of Him who is *Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come.* †

You next, Sir, treat us with an odd account of “*ideas* which are *imperceptible* when they *vary much* from that *destined* pace with which they *all* follow one another in a *regular* and *uniform* succession.” This to be sure is not quite so perspicuous as the shadowless Frenchman, celebrated above; but your meaning I conceive to be this --- Ideas will appear confused, or in one continued stream, if they succeed each other with such a rapidity,

† Rev. Chap. 1. , that

that the mind has not sufficient time to contemplate and distinguish them; but from hence we might surely draw an argument for the existence of time, because it proves it's being necessary to perception.

To all this reasoning you subjoin what I must be pardoned in thinking is no bad example of "fimi-les unlike." "We now, you say, see every object *as it passes*, through a small aperture *separately*, as in a Camera Obscura, and this we call time, but at the conclusion of this state the window may be thrown open, and the whole prospect appear at one view." Now why objects seen through a Camera Obscura have a more *progressive*, or a more *separate* appearance, I cannot tell;
and

and though when the window is thrown open, the prospect may, to be sure, be somewhat wider, yet what idea can this trifling difference be supposed to give us of *infinite*, in contradistinction to *finite* perception ! Here permit me just to hint, that had I been inclined to make a comparison out of this beautiful experiment, I would have said, that the glory and brilliancy of objects there represented, might serve perhaps the best of any thing in nature to afford us a glimpse of a future state.

You assert that "time has no more a real essence, independent of thought, and action, than sight, hearing, and smell have independent of their proper organs" to speak

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accurately, you should have said, that the idea of time is gained by reflection, as that of matter is by sensation. It does not follow however that either time or matter are non-entities because they may happen not to be perceived, for then the sun in a perfectly dark night, and an undiscovered mineral in the bowels of the earth, would be non-entities.

Your next argument militates directly against your own supposition. "There are passages in scripture," you say, "declaring the annihilation of time, at the consummation of all things," --- What stronger proof then can we have that time at present is *something*? otherwise these passages would declare
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the *annihilation of nothing*. The only text you produce is that amazingly sublime one in the Revelations: *And the angel which I saw stand upon sea and the earth, lifted up his hand towards heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, &c. that there should be time no longer.* † The period here put to time plainly implies it's previous existence, and this sublime imagery is intended to express, that *human life*, and indeed all things *temporal*, whose duration is measured by stated periods, will then be no more, that the prophecies have received their completion, and that time must thenceforth be swallowed up in eternity! To use the word *time* to mean our present being is common

† Rev. x. 5, 6.

and

and familiar ; thus the unfortunate Lord Ruffel, just before his execution, wound up his watch with this striking and beautiful reflection, "I have now done with time, and must think only of eternity."

Leaving Philosophy and theology, you now, Sir, last of all, condescend to quibble us into conviction. You compare the attributes and powers of time with those of nothing, when *realized* (you mean *personified*.) " Nothing, you say, when supposed to be *something* (no, Sir, it is supposed to be *nothing*) is thus described by Lord Rochester,

Nothing, thou elder brother e'en to shade!

Thou hadst a Being, ere the world was made,

And well fix'd are alone of ending not afraid.

These conceits, however, as it happens, are *not* applicable to time,
and

and if they are so to eternity, it is not because eternity is nothing, but because it may be looked upon as the first of created things. --- You have more of this sort of conundrum-argument, which I beg leave to refer to it's proper patroness, the Lady Diaria.

“ From this non-existence of time *thus established,* ” you say, “ many conclusions will arise both useful and entertaining. ” Now tho' to refute *conclusions* drawn from false premises might seem a *wasteful and ridiculous excess,* yet, for the elucidation of your reasoning, I shall just cursorily say a few words on each.

First. If the world was to revolve round the sun in one day, and all our thoughts and actions
which

which now take up a year could be comprized in that one day, then that day would not only *seem*, but actually *be* a year—— This is mere trifling, for it supposes all our faculties, as well as the course of nature, to be different from what they are.

Secondly. Hence it follows, that the more ideas we have in a given time, the longer this time will not only *seem* but actually *be* —— It will not even *seem* longer, for it is to the lazy and the indolent that time appears the longest, in proportion to the leisure they have for contemplating and reflecting on it's succession.

Thirdly. We cannot form a judgment of the lives, enjoyments, or

suf-

sufferings* of animals, because we are totally unacquainted with the progression of their ideas, so that the insect† that survives but a day may live as long as that which breaths a century. — As the lapse of time is regular and uniform, we *can* judge of the respective lives of animals as well as of any thing else in nature.

* Your Disquisition on Cruelty then must appear superfluous.

† A moral Poet might say

Thine's a summer, mine's no more,
Tho' repeated to threescore :

But this language does not so well suit the metaphysician.—And here, Sir, you should have referred to your original, which was doubtless that excellent Essay by Bp. Pearce in the Freethinker, No. 114, lately reprinted in the Gent. Mag. for 1777.

Fourth.

Fourthly. We cannot judge of real evils because we know not their duration, and things are here exhibited to us by scraps and detached portions, and look like mishapen blotches, &c. — I thought just now that we could not judge of the sufferings of animals, for want of knowing the progression of their ideas, but surely we know the progression of our own, so that we have little chance, alas! of being unacquainted with *real evils*. As to the appearance of nature's being like mishapen blotches, the reader may be referred to my first quotation from you (p. 4.) and to the whole of your next Disquisition.

Fifthly. Time being nothing can put an end to nothing; and as
thought

thought bears no relation to time, so the soul can bear no relation to it either, and therefore must be eternal. — Time, or rather causes which cannot exist but in time, do however put an end to all perishable things, and therefore time is something. --- If time be something, then surely it bears a very close relation to our thoughts, and I hope I have sufficiently proved that the soul may bear a relation to time, and to eternity likewise.

Sixthly. On this article I must be more explicit, since your reasoning is curious, and essential to the point in hand. You represent divines, and metaphysicians as having a receipt to make eternity, and this is “Take of time quant. suff. chop it into small pieces, then add these

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millions upon millions, and extend it both ways till it is fit for use. — Then divide it in the middle, and pull each end like a jugler's ribband as far as you please, which will make the half of eternity equal to a whole, &c. Here after setting your divines to *make* what they acknowledge, like yourself, they cannot *comprehend*, you fly to the old quibble that half an eternity will be equal to a whole. That an eternity, a priori, or a posteriori, should be called *eternity* may argue indeed a poverty in language, but this can be no proof that there is no such thing. Will you allow that it is possible for God to create an immortal being? since this does not imply a contradiction, I suppose you will. Such a being then must begin to
 exist

exist in time, but will not cease to exist to all eternity: this surely is intelligible enough, though there may be no single word to express such existence; so that it is not true that "whatever had a beginning must have an end, and what has no end could have no beginning, &c" * But further, --- As a repetition of what you before said, you again insist that "time is finite and successive, and eternity infinite and *instantaneous*, so that their properties are no more applicable to each other than those of sounds to colours, or colours to sounds; and we can no more form eternity out of time, than by mixing red, blue and green, we can compose an anthem, or an opera" ! --- *Risum teneatis amici?*

* See above, page 39.

In truth, common sense, like an awkward booby, is afraid of intruding on such company as this --- so fine, so learned, and such *entire strangers* ! --- however to be serious, Your supposition that the attributes of time and eternity are not applicable to each other, has been, I hope, sufficiently refuted above.* Time indeed is finite, and eternity infinite, from the very nature of each ; in other respects we have no reason to doubt but that they may be analogous, as far as we can be able to judge of what you yourself confess to be incomprehensible.

Seventhly. Your seventh and last division branches out into several others ; for by this hypothesis that time and eternity are not analogous,

* Page 65.

many

many metaphysical and theological cobwebs you say may be brushed off, and impertinent enquiries cut short, such as about “God’s foreknowledge and predestination --- the præexistent and future state of souls --- the injustice of eternal punishments --- and the sleep of the soul.”

First, Sir, you fall upon the creation, (which you forgot I believe to put into the above catalogue) and to the absurd and presumptuous question, Why did not God create the world sooner? you answer on your own principles, That “he neither created it soon nor late, because there is no time.” Now you will pardon me, Sir, if I think that the existence of time, if not of progressive thoughts and actions even in
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the Deity, is proved by the creation itself, for *in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, &c.* And here you have yourself hung up some metaphysical cobwebs, which, by the help of what we have already said, may be easily brushed off.

Having thus *undone creation at a jerk*, you come to foreknowledge and predestination, which you set aside because they imply succession, which has no relation to the essence or perception of God. Now if the foreknowledge of God be every where declared in scripture, this may serve to shew that his perception has something like progression. The foreknowledge of God is indisputable, and when we consider that *his ways are not as our ways,*
nor

nor his thoughts as our thoughts, †
 we may surely conceive a predesti-
 nation which may be consistent with
 free-will.

Here I could not but wonder to
 see you systematically sacrificing not
 only a future state, but your own
 favorite idea of præexistence too!
 You talk of a mode of eternal
 existence, in which, perhaps, the
 soul may not even know what time
 means, but how the soul could have
 contracted all those offences in a
 præexistent state, which you sup-
 pose it to have done in your third
 Disquisition, without any time to
 contract them in, is, I own, beyond
 my comprehension.

The next article ought surely to
 have been with-held, in which, un-

† *Isaiah* lv. 8.

der the notion of defending the justice (or rather the mercy) of God, you give a loose to your strictures on the tremendous sanction of religion, and talk about eternal punishments being neither long nor short, because inflicted in a state to which you have not been pleased to allow duration. This, Sir, is a subject much too awful to be lightly philosophized upon, and an idea, alas! far from being removable by such reasoning as yours.

With respect to the sleep of the soul you have brought up no new argument, but have only been at the trouble of putting the old one on a wrong footing. If the soul does not perceive the distance between

tween it's departure and the general judgment, this is not because time is nothing, either here or hereafter, but, because like a man in a profound sleep, the soul *may* be in such a state as to be unconscious of the lapse of time.

Nothing more, I hope, need be said in confutation of so strange a position as the above. Instead therefore of entangling ourselves in such metaphysical cobwebs, how much better would it be to consider and enforce the use and importance of time. *Soles pereunt & imputantur* * says the poet; and still more admirably pointed and expressive is that of the divine poet, *So teach*

* Martial, Lib. V. Ep. 21.

us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. †

After all, you profess your own doubts as to the credulity of your readers, who from custom and prejudice will be unable to abstract existence from time --- nay even, you think, though you should suggest “that various planets are peopled by various beings, and this world itself by innumerable genera, *whose existence is quite unknown, and incomprehensible to each other*; so that as some of these inhabit the unfathomable ocean, *time may be no more necessary to existence than water.*” Now as to your planetary system it is obvious to observe, that all we know of such inhabitants is by ana-

† Psalm XC. 12.

logy, which analogy strongly points out to us that they exist in time; and as to your mundane argument, since I cannot allow that *logic is no more necessary to reasoning than water*, so I cannot think we ought to defer all logical conclusions, till every shell-fish is able to comprehend them. --- In truth your appeal to the animal creation seems to be remarkably unfortunate, since, if we set aside the calls of nature, there is no one circumstance of which all animals (I had almost said vegetables too) appear to have so universal a perception as of the existence, and periodical returns of time.

But the chief reason why mankind will be so unwilling to *come in*

you seem to think is self-interest :
 “ A merchant subsisting on long credit, a lawyer enriched by delay, a divine who has purchased a next presentation, a general who is in no hurry to fight, or a minister whose object is the continuance of his power,” will not easily be convinced that time is nothing. You have here, Sir, given us an odd jumble of people in different, and even opposite situations ; some *for* the prolongation of time, and others *against* it. The lawyer, general, and minister will be against your nullum tempus bill, --- the divine, and merchant, (who will certainly wish for a quick return) will probably be for it, so that you plainly see it will *not pass*. Nor do I think

think you will much encrease your party by sending people “ into the sequestered shades of solitude that they may be able to contemplate such abstracted speculations,” since what is false in town will be false in the country, and the more it is considered the more false it will appear ; so that I cannot perhaps conclude better than by acknowledging, that you have thrown out one idea in which it is probable you will not be deceived, and that is, that to some persons all that you have here said “ will appear to be unprofitable illusions, if not *incomprehensible nonsense*.”

LET-

L E T T E R V.

T O T H E S A M E.

On his Disquisition respecting “ The
Analogy between Things material and in-
tellectual. ”

S I R,

WHEN I first read the title
of this Disquisition, I ex-
pected to have been led by it into
the depths of the controversy on
Materialism, and to have been o-
bliged to labour thro’ the subtleties
of logic to the subtleties of matter.
I was beginning to collect ideas a-
bout the properties or powers of
matter, and to consider, whether if
attraction

attraction and repulsion could be looked upon as superadded to it, sensation and reflection might not be so likewise, or, whether the soul's operation might not be accounted for on electrical principles. --- Nor was I without apprehensions that your analogy might break in upon free-will, and end in the necessarian scheme, by which I apprehend the mind is represented as submitting to be acted upon by motives exactly in the same manner as the body by mechanical powers, which seems to be the properest method that could be taken of approximating the soul to mere matter. --- However I was glad to find that I should not again be involved in metaphysics, but that your ob-
ject

ject was only a comparison, or parallel between the natural and moral worlds. “ There are, you say, in the elements of the natural world, and in the passions and actions of mankind, powers and propensities of a similar nature ; which operate in a similar manner throughout every part of the material, moral, and political systems.”

You have doubtless, Sir, treated the present subject, as well as all the rest, with great spirit and vivacity, and tho’ the *stern* virtue of criticism might perhaps look upon some parts of your analogy as rather fanciful, yet having committed some peccadillos of the same kind myself (to paper I mean, for I have not yet committed them

them to the press) I shall naturally be more inclined to excuse, than censure them in this respect. This Disquisition indeed is less exceptionable than any of the rest ; so that since matter has already grown under my hands more than I was aware, and since I foresee that I must be more diffuse on some future passages than I at first intended, I could have been contented to have omitted the present article, but that uniformity requires I should give a sketch of it, and make some cursory observations.

I know not why you should call this theory abstruse and difficult, since such an idea of analogy between the natural and moral worlds is not new, and you yourself make

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it very plain and easy by the following considerations——That the disorders both of the natural and moral world are cured, or defeated by their own excesses: The sun by intense heat raises vapours to mitigate it's own fury, and the villain debilitates his powers by excess: (as a properer counterpart you might have said, that a tyranny, like that of James the Second, begets an effectual opposition against itself.) —— That the elements, and the vices of mankind, are each of them restrained in their most destructive effects by their mutual opposition: —— That as the middle climates of the natural world are most salubrious, so the middle ranks in the moral are best adapted to virtue
and

and happiness ; and yet, — That there are no climates in the one, nor stations in the other, which have not peculiar advantages dealt out to them by the impartial hand of Providence. &c.

You next enter on a parallel between the material and political worlds, in which you compare attraction to self-love, (both attraction and repulsion might have been well exemplified by the Hudibrastic principles of love and fighting) --- Attraction, you say, which breaks a man's neck by tumbling him from a rock, is that also which binds together the whole globe, and every individual lump of matter in it, in the same manner as self-interest, or what we mistake for it, is the

source of all our crimes, and most of our sufferings, and yet is the bond of society and spring of all our noblest actions.

Here let me observe, that when you speak of attraction, as binding all matter, you again tumble yourself from the rock of speculation into the immense ocean of metaphysics; for, it seems, you are “inclined to think, that without attraction matter itself would be annihilated, since what is infinitely divisible would without attraction become infinitely divided, and consequently annihilated.” Here you draw a conclusion from premises which are neither practicable nor conceivable, as is plain from the doctrine of Mr. Locke, quoted in
my

my last letter. † We might indeed ask you How that which is by it's own nature infinitely divisible can ever be infinitely divided? since by this it would lose this essential property of it's nature, *viz.* infinite divisibility. I wish not however to dwell any longer on the doctrine of infinity, which, as we have seen, must always be the doctrine of error. By this effects or conclusions of any sort may be produced; we may divide matter in infinitum, till our reasonings, like their subject, become lost in their own infinite dissolution; or, we may compress it till, whatever may become of matter, our arguments, at least, may be said to be impenetrable.

† Page 69.

But

But to return to your material and political analogy. The contention of elements you justly compare to that of parties. Whig and Tory, Sir, are the elements of the political world, the due and moderate contention of these should certainly be kept up, and it is the part of every honest man to oppose that which seems likely to gain an undue ascendancy. --- but more of this in my seventh letter.

Here you proceed to contrast the vicissitudes of weather with those of peace and war ; of which latter you seem now to have a more favourable opinion than when you wrote your first and third Disquisitions, since you allow it to be of use in the general system.

Poverty,

“Poverty, wealth, industry, idleness, ignorance, science, despotism, and liberty succeed one another,” you say, “like winter and summer:” These are indeed alternately doom’d by their excesses to destroy themselves and produce their opposites. --- “The flux and reflux of the air, like political controversy, prevents stagnation, and each of these when carried to excess, gives rise in the one case to storms and inundations, and in the other to anarchy and confusion,” and you might have added, despotism too. --- Here again you pay a compliment to war, and agree with Lord Bacon, That war is to states as exercise to individuals --- wholesome in moderation, but ruinous in excess. Now,

Now, Sir, throughout the whole of these parallelisms you have obligingly furnished us with a solution of those difficulties which in your third Disquisition so much disconcerted you, and made you fly for an explanation of them to an anti-mundane state of things. --- For a further elucidation of this subject I would refer the reader to an excellent sermon of the late Bishop of Gloucester on God's moral government, which I the rather mention because it will point out also wherein the two systems above compared are *not* parallel.

I shall just observe further, That your conclusion of this article is excellent, in which you give a display of the glory of that Almighty Being

Being who hath connected all things moral, as well as natural, by this wonderful chain of reciprocal dependance --- who can say, not only to the elements, and the seasons, but to the events of life, and the passions of men, "Hitherto shall ye go and no further." Though these effects then may be generally overlooked, as proceeding from fix'd causes and operations of nature, yet in fact, "nature is nothing more than the art of her omnipotent Author ;" or, as the the great Poet expresses it in a work somewhat similar to your first and present Disquisitions,

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee ;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see. *

* Essay on Man, Ep. I.

P

LET-

L E T T E R VI.

T O T H E S A M E.

On his Disquisition respecting “ Rational
Christianity. ”

S I R,

Q Uitting philosophy and metaphysics, you now direct our attention in the three remaining Disquisitions---First to theology, --- Secondly, to politics, --- And lastly to both of these united.

“ Several learned men, ” you say,
“ to whom revelation has appeared
to be contradictory to reason and
equity, have undertaken the arduous task of reconciling them. ” To
attempt

attempt with too much nicety to reconcile the conduct of the Almighty with the rules of human reason, is indeed highly dangerous and presumptuous. As far as this is proper or possible it has surely been so well effected by our divines, that no thinking man, who takes proper pains to inform himself, need fall into the above fatal delusion. We are not however totally to exclude reason (of which we shall presently see the use) from our religious enquiries, tho' in contemplating the great truths of revelation we should certainly "endeavour to exalt the human understanding to the comprehension of the sublime doctrines of the gospel, rather than to reduce those doctrines to the low standard of human reason."

Who the persons are whom you at present attack under the title of *Rationalists* you have not declared. They seem to be the petitioning clergy, with numbers of the dissenters, and in general those many new-fashioned thinkers, who aping the futile philosophy of the beaux-esprits of the continent, have fritter'd away revelation into a mere compendium of ethics.

If all these be intended, there should certainly have been a distinction made, since, among the two first descriptions, there are, I hope and trust, many serious and well-meaning men, who think they are rendering God service, by their attempts to explain revelation into an unnecessary consistency with reason.

These

These then should not have been represented as the genuine offspring of the atheists of the last century ; tho' they ought most seriously to consider, whether their system may not unhappily have been instrumental in encouraging that *reasoning pride*, which has almost banished religion from the higher ranks of life. You are very properly severe on those who retaining an empty faith, will yet find quibbles from their own reason to excuse their compliance with the commandments of the gospel, " who are happy to learn how they may be christians, without believing one principle of the institution ; and reject the substance of christianity, tho' they would be shocked at relinquishing the name."

These

These two sorts of men we might call speculative and practical Rationalists, and qualified by the above distinction, your Disquisition may be of great use, especially in polite circles, who, it is hoped, may be induced to pay attention to what falls from a man of fashion on such a subject as this. I shall however make a few supplementary observations, which, without denying the principle, may correct some mistakes in your manner of treating it.

You revert, in two different places of this Disquisition, to the natural original depravity of man, and the redemption which is consequent upon it, and these you now represent as *adverse* to all the principles of human

human reason. Had you said *superior* to it, you would have said right ; but whether they be adverse or superior, it must either way evince the impropriety of your forcing this subject, in your third Disquisition, before the tribunal of so incompetent a judge.

As to the redemption, of which this depravity is a cause, you rightly represent it as involving the highest mysteries, but these you should surely have rather placed in the *manner* or *circumstances*, than in the *grounds* of this dispensation. " Reason, you say, assures us that sufferings can never be compensations for past crimes, much less can the sufferings of one Being atone for the guilt of another. " To say that sufferings in a moral sense
are

are compensations for crimes, may be exceptionable, but, in a judicial or religious sense, they may surely be looked upon as *atonements to justice*; and as to vicarious punishments, what else were sacrifices so generally allowed of in the heathen world? or how can we suppose them *adverse* to human reason, so long as the stories (whether true or false) of an Iphigenia, a Codrus, or a Curtius are remembered?

“To prove the *reasonableness* of a revelation” you say “is to destroy it, because a revelation implies an information of something which reason cannot discover, and therefore must be different from its deductions, or it would be no revelation.” To explain by reason what was intended to be revealed above
reason

reason (as some things must necessarily be) is certainly absurd ; but then the *reasonableness* of the *evidence* must be proved, otherwise the revelation would have no solid foundation. With respect to the particular circumstances revealed, some of these will doubtless be such as reason could not discover, nor fully comprehend, but nothing can be admitted as revelation which is *adverse* or contrary to reason, because this would clash with those principles on which the revelation is built, and thus the credibility would be destroyed. †

† Many things for a time have been thought inconsistent with reason, which, when properly investigated, have proved to be quite otherwise. Galileo was thrown into the Inquisition for saying the earth

Q

moved,

History is in some respects an information of what reason could not discover, so that revelation, which is no other than a history of heavenly things, may well be expected to contain matters far above the comprehension of human reason, and which, when revealed, it can only contemplate at an awful distance. The Angels, no doubt, understand much more of these things than ourselves, and yet we are told That there are circumstances in the divine œconomy which even they are still anxious to look into. Their inability then, in this respect, should moved, and a Bishop of Saltzburg was persecuted for asserting that there were Antipodes. — I only wonder they did not hang him up by the heels.

check

check the reasoning pride of man in his present state, and their eagerness should excite the emulation of every one, and especially of the philosopher, to attain in a future being that fund of divine knowledge which is evidently so desirable. Might we not then presume to conjecture that there may be a scale, or gradation of mysteries rising up to the Trinity itself, which, for ought we know, may be as much above any other doctrine in the intellectual universe, as the smallest fix'd star is above the moon in the surrounding heavens --- and yet this great doctrine is not mounted so high as to be contradictory to reason, for we say not, as is objected to us, That one is equal to three; but only, That in the essence of the

Godhead there is an union, or coexistence, of so sublime and mystical a nature as to be totally imperceivable by the eye of reason, and of which the visual optics of faith can afford a very faint and glimmering discernment.

Now as there are mysteries in religion, (and that there should be seems so consonant to reason, that I am surprized any lovers of reason could bring themselves to doubt it) so there are, as you observe, some precepts in the gospel (and are not these parts of revelation?) which are no more a mystery than the Ethics of Aristotle, or the Offices of Cicero. The truth is --- Revelation was intended to teach us our duty towards our neighbour, as well
as

as towards God ; the precepts respecting the first of these duties are such as regard our conduct in common life, and consequently must be level to our capacities, in order to be of any use to us ; whereas the scriptural information which the Deity has vouchsafed us of his own essence is from it's own nature incomprehensible, and with respect to the use it is intended for, it is far from being necessary that it should be otherwise.

Strange as it may seem, yet there is much truth in your observation, That we are grossly deceived by reason even in political matters, since constant experience shews us, that the fine schemes of our system-builders, tho' highly plausible in theory,

theory, are impossible in practice. Reason indeed is equally fallacious in common life : We naturally expect that a man, to whom we have been considerable benefactors, will be grateful for it ; but it is probable that experience will soon convince us, that he is capable of being so much the more our enemy on that account : Reason therefore, unless guided by *experience* will mislead us even in things which are seen ; how then shall she be able to guide us in respect to things which are not seen, and of which we have as yet had no experience ?

I shall make but one more observation on this subject, and that is That after much severity against the Rationalist (which indeed is richly deserved

deserved by such as assuming the name of Christians, yet argue away their obligations to observe the moral precepts of their Master) you seem to speak with an alarming complacency in favour of Deism, (on which I shall have a future opportunity of animadverting) --- "A religious and moral Deist," you say, "is a character by no means disgraceful to a virtuous man:" If you mean in comparison of a false and hypocritical christian, why was you not explicit? if otherwise, such a declaration surely ill-becomes an opposer of Rationalism, and a professed champion of the christian faith!

Is it then no disgraceful character to spurn at all the proffered mercies
of

of the divine œconomy, and to resist a weight of evidence, which, no one surely who had a degree of sense above that of a bel-esprit, could be able to withstand? But “such,” you say, “were Socrates, Plato, and Cicero,” --- What --- could they have been such under the Christian Dispensation? Surely no. How much better, Sir, would it have been had you represented these as the foundest divines in their respective ages, and such as would have been among the foremost of that venerable class in ours. Shall then the son of Sophronisba, who was almost a type of the Messias himself, be transformed into a modern compound of scepticism and presumption? The good
Erasmus

Erasmus, Sir, would have given you much juster ideas of these worthies, whom we might entitle, Christians by anticipation ; nor should I deem it inconsistent with the spirit of protestantism to join in his apostrophe, where he says, *Vix mihi tempero, quin dicam,---Sancte Socrates ora pro nobis ! **

* Erasmi. Conviv. relig.

R

LET

L E T T E R VII.

T O T H E S A M E.

On his Disquisition respecting "Government and Civil Liberty."

SIR,

TH E R E having been an express answer published * to this Disquisition, which seems to contain the creed of your political opponents, I shall endeavour to ascertain the truth by comparing, and moderating between you. In doing this I must perhaps depart somewhat from the method I have hitherto observed.

* For J. Debrett, Piccadilly. — Since the printing my third Letter I am informed there is an Answer to that Disquisition, but have not seen it.

I am

I am far from thinking with you that nothing can be added on political subjects "which can afford either instruction or entertainment" since there never was a period, I fear, in which *proper* discussions of this sort were more necessary. This indeed is dangerous ground --- for politicians are infinitely more a genus irritabile than poets, and he will be little likely to please either party who is free to blame both, and will go lengths with neither,

While tories call him whig and whigs a tory

You say "there have been principles lately disseminated with unusual industry which are absurd, false, mischievous, as inconsistent with common sense as with all human

society ;” This your answerer warmly retorts ; and here let me just hint, that the word *disseminate* ought not, I think, to refer to the writings of ingenious men, but to the industrious propagation of principles, by means of emissaries, paragraphs, hand-bills, &c.

The principles you oppose are the following,

- 1st. That all men are born equal.
- 2d. That all men are born free.
- 3d. That all government is derived from the people.
- 4th. That all government is a compact between the governors and the governed.
- 5th. That no government ought to last any longer than it continues to be of equal advantage to the two contracting parties, that is, to the governed as to the governors.

As

As to the first, --- "Men," you say, "are not born equal in point of strength, health, beauty, riches, or fine parts, &c." to which your answerer properly enough replies, that this is not what his party means, but a natural equality as to *sovereignty* (but have not strength, genius, &c. a natural tendency to produce and establish sovereignty?) --- they mean, he says, "that state wherein all power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another --- that freedom from subordination, which, antecedent to civil compact, belongs to every individual of our species, who is arrived at years of discretion." There may have been many states antecedent to civil compact, but as to

to there being a state previous to subordination I can only say, *Gentle shepherd tell me where !*

Supposing the above to be, as I believe it is, a tolerably just epitome of the Lockian system, I cannot but suspect that it implies a contradiction in terms, since this is to be a state *prior* to subordination in general, and yet *posterior* to that subordination which the first compact-makers were under during their minority. This would lead us to the patriarchal scheme of Sir Robert Filmer, which however is acknowledged by Mr. Locke,* though the shocking principles deduced from it had been so nobly and effectually refuted by him.

* See Locke on Civ. Gov. § 74, &c. and § 105, &c. The above work has so far got

This state of nature could only have existed amongst savages, and so it is understood, as appears by Mr. Locke's appeal (whether right or wrong) for the reality of it, to certain tribes of half-brutes † in America. Supposing then that there was a state of nature, and *the start of the majestic world*, as that it was esteemed a kind of literary treason to doubt any thing it contained. But this great man was far from meaning to establish an intellectual despotism, or preclude others for ever from the exercise of their *unalienable* right of reason. In his preface he invites the candid critic, and professes himself open to conviction. Would to God his principles had been thoroughly canvassed twenty years ago!

† I see no reason why these degenerated, degraded human beings might not *originally* have had subordination.

two or three men-savages, distinctly created, were accidentally to meet in it, without language, or any ideas about government, might we not conjecture that one of them by his air, presence, eye, &c. might impress the others with an idea of his superiority, so that he would naturally lead the way, and the others as naturally follow. This is surely possible, and Heaven in such a case might provide that it should be real. Montesquieu is of opinion, * that in a state of nature “every man would fancy himself *inferior* instead of being sensible of his equality.

Whatever such original people might do, being savages, cannot be any precedent to us ; if they form-

* Spirit of Laws, Book I. Chap. 2.

ed societies, it would be enough to set us against them ; but the truth is, men were *not* originally savages ; * *ergo cadit questio* --- Now had there been such a natural equality, as is here supposed, and the inferences from it expedient, and conducive to the well-being of such a creature as man, I must be permitted to think

* We know but little of the first patriarchs, but from what is recorded of them, can any one doubt whether Adam, or Noah had as much good sense or good manners as ourselves ? and to descend a little lower, let any man who has a head to understand, or a heart to feel, read the 23d and 24th chapters of Genesis, and then tell me whether the true politeness contained in them was ever exceeded in the most brilliant court of Christendom. — *Whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil* — or, at least, tends to it.

S

that

that the great Lord of nature would have given us as clear and explicit an information of it's reality, as he has of the rights of sovereignty, and the duty of sovereigns.

II. That all men are born free--- Here, Sir, you are very facetious * about our imprisonment in the womb, our swadling-cloths, nurses, school-masters, &c.† What is meant

* This your Answerer is angry at, because "the subject is of great importance" but Mr. Locke himself is sometimes very comical (B. I. § 6.) and should the greatest genius on earth write a treatise founded on a state of nature, which is --- nobody knows what --- he will scarcely avoid, now and then, laying himself open to the wicked wits. (Compare Civ. Gov. § 27 and 28, with Tristram Shandy, Vol. III. C. 34.)

† Mr. Locke himself says, (§ 55) "Children, I confess, are not born in this full state

however is a natural right to freedom, derived from a state of equality previous to subordination; and this, as your Answerer acknowledges, must stand or fall with the last article.

To deny us such natural rights as would be excessive and incompatible with our happiness, is very consistent with the goodness of God, but then he has endowed us with sense and spirit enough to secure to ourselves as many *civil* rights as are necessary and safe. In this sense it is that we of this land are indeed *born* superlatively *free*. This is the true substantial liberty to which we state of equality, though they are born to it. The bonds of subjection to their parents are like the swadling cloths, &c."

are

are entitled by our birth-right, and for this we are indebted, under Heaven, to that excellent constitution, which it is our duty to guard from all encroachments, whether of the monarch, or the people.

“With a great sum” said the chief captain, “obtained I this [political] freedom,” (vastly inferior to our own) --- and Paul said “But I WAS FREE BORN” † Of this sort of freedom and its privileges this great apostle frequently boasted ; but there is not, I believe, the smallest hint, either here or elsewhere, in the only book which could have described our primæval state, of any such natural ante-compact freedom as Mr. Locke supposes ;

† Acts xxii, 28.

whence

whence it should seem that there is no genuine liberty above that of a brute,* but what is supported by some authority; and Mr. Locke owns † that “in *all states* of created beings, *capable of laws*, where there is no law there is no freedom.”

That we are naturally subjects, without our own explicit consent, seems asserted by Mr. Hooker, as quoted by Mr. Locke. ‡ That chil-

* Mr. Locke says (§ 63) that “natural freedom is grounded on our having *reason*” How then can brutes have it at all? or how can men have it equally when their reason is so different? The truth seems to be, that some savages bordering on brutes, have a sort of natural freedom, but reasonable beings have a suitably superior kind of liberty, viz. the *civil*.

‡ -- § 57.

† -- § 134.

dren

dren should be born *outlaws*, (and thereby have no right to protection) in order that they may have a power of consenting, or not, to be governed when they come of age, seems strangely unnecessary ; for in this case they must explicitly give up such right when of age, since no state would suffer them to demur. To have universal registers for this purpose would be endless, and *evil doers* will never willingly consent to that which is expressly instituted for their *punishment*.*

III. That all government is (originally) derived from the people --- This, like the rest, is impossible to be ascertained : We know of no original author of societies, but God himself ;† but what is the doctrine

* I. Pet. ii, 14. † Ecclus. xvii, 17.

intended to be derived from it? The people, as having *intrusted* the magistrate, may resist or depose him whenever they *apprehend* he invades their rights: ‡ So then the magistrate, who is the intrusted party, must never resist the people, if he *apprehends* they have invaded *his* rights. This will hardly be approved of by any one who recollects that the rights on both sides

‡ Civ. Gov. (§ 240) All this would be proper if it were true, as Mr. L. says (§ 209) that a good king may make himself beloved by his subjects, as a father by his children." This alas is too often contradicted by history and experience. A series of prosperity will make people rebel even against their God — Were mankind perfect, such systems would be excellent, but then — what need of any government at all?

are

are equally essential to the *salus populi*.†

Mr. Locke observes (§ 134) “that the *legislative* is sacred and unalterable in the hands where the community have once placed it;” (this is saying a great deal) and Mr. Hooker, as *unfortunately* quoted by him (§ 135), tells us that “laws politic are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience to the sacred laws of his own nature: in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of

† Surely the hand of providence is discernible in our *not* being permitted to know our primæval state, which might afford a pretence for intolerable pride and insolence, either in the one party or the other.

his

his depraved mind, little better than a wild beast, &c.” If the people be half so bad as this, such a body is not very fit to be constituted the *King of Kings*.

IV. That all government is a compact between the governors and the governed --- If this be meant *originally* and in a state of nature, enough has been said of it already. Mr. Locke (tho’ not very consistently with some other parts of his book) seems to give up this original compact, where he says, (§ 94.) “ Perhaps at first some excellent man might have so far got the pre-eminency, that by a kind of *natural authority* the chief rule devolved on him by *tacit* consent, without any other caution but their assurance of

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his

his uprightness and wisdom, &c.”
 Supposing then this *excellent man*,
 like another Orpheus, to have ci-
 vilized the rude people into regular
 government, might we not say, that
 government proceeded rather from
him than *them*?

Mr. Locke however is perfectly
 right in saying That such an arbitra-
 ry way would soon degenerate, and
 become intolerable, and hence the
 necessity for those regulations which
 have from time to time taken place
 in well ordered states, and to which
 we owe the *civil* which is the only
 intelligible, or desirable liberty ---
 Call such regulations compacts, and
 the difficulty vanishes.

To this liberty which is subsequent
 (not antecedent) to compact, every
 reason-

reasonable creature has an undoubted, tho' not an *unalienable*, right. Where this is not claimed it must be owing to the weakness and degeneracy of the people, † and where it is enjoyed in it's full extent, the great danger is, lest it should be over-strained, in which case there is scarce a doubt but that ere long it must be forfeited, and --- lost. Our great political duty then is to defend our own constitution,

† There is a difference between the manner in which some monarchs have been treated, and the style of address used to the Persian tyrant, of which some excellent examples may be seen in the Chevalier Chardin, (chap. 24,) where one of his ministers thus expresses himself, "May my soul, and that of all his other slaves be sacrificed to the dust of his blessed feet."

which, tho' not perfect in theory, is in fact (if I may be pardoned the equivouque) the most admirably *compacted* of any upon the face of the earth.

V. That no government ought to last any longer than it continues to be of *equal* advantage to the two contracting parties, that is, to the governed as the governors --- The word *equal* is ambiguous, and you have chosen to take it in it's wrong sense, as if it meant, That every one was to have an equal share of wealth, power, &c. If we substitute the word *respective* or *proportionable* instead of *equal*, then as referring to cases of extreme necessity, the proposition I fear is undeniable.

Nothing

Nothing certainly but system or party could have made a man of Mr. Locke's philanthropy argue with such coolness, and unconcern, about the most horrific condition of human nature --- a civil war. This he constantly calls an *appeal to heaven*, tho' in general he might have called it much more truly and emphatically an *appeal to hell*. The times indeed in which he lived may be an apology for this, but might not these very times have furnished him with a different system? Might they not have suggested, that, where the people are not the aggressors, but are really and sensibly aggrieved, they will generally have temper and firmness enough to procure the most

effectual

effectual redress without the necessity of blood-shed? *

The above sketch (which is all I could effect at present --- and for which I have made room by withdrawing some less digressive matter) needs no apology. I admire the great philosopher, and as far as his principles are consistent with his motto, the *salus populi*, I am most

* The coolness with which the revolution was effected is somewhat evidenced by the following. On the king's being informed from time to time, of the defection of his lords to the prince of Orange, prince George of Denmark who attended him was used to lift up his hands and eyes and exclaim — *Est il possible?* — At last it was told the king that prince George himself was gone over; nay then, said he, if *Est il possible* is gone, it is time for me to go too.

cordially

cordially with him --- The danger is lest we be misled by *great names*; and in fact, the errors of the greatest geniuses are proportionably greater than those of other men.

To refute an arbitrary system, and teach the world that there are cases in which a tyrant may be opposed was a noble design, and it has had it's full effect in these kingdoms; for who is there in them who believes in the arbitrary system of Sir Robert Filmer, or doubts that there are cases in which a tyrant may be opposed? * But if these principles are found to be such as

* This kings are not ignorant of. It reflects honor on the present king of Denmark, that on being shewn the portrait of Oliver Cromwell in Sidney college library, he exclaimed, *Il fait me peur !*

would

would arm what is called the *people* with those very terrors, and that

— Right divine of doing wrong, of which kings have been deprived. Such, in short, as would give the multitudes, who are ever desirous of disturbing commonwealths, a *natural unalienable* right to do so, they are such as I must think Mr. Locke, if alive at present, would himself reject * --- Whether these or similar principles are reserved by Heaven, as instruments of vengeance on a rebellious people, Heaven only knows!

* Could this great and amiable man have lived to see the ill effects of his system, as he did the good ones, he would have wept like Johnny Gay, at the unforeseen consequences of his own superior genius.

I shall

I shall now make a few remarks (out of the many I originally intended) first on your Answerer, and then on yourself --- He complains that "the door of St. James's is shut in the face of the Whigs," and yet "he hopes, and is persuaded, that the wisdom of the House of Hanover will keep at an awful distance from the throne men professing principles which levelled with the dust the House of Stewart." This is a wish to shut the door of St. James's in the face of somebody.

If we add to this men professing principles, which, under Cromwell, levelled with the dust the rights of the people, --- there can be no objection. Should Tories degenerate into Jacobites, or Whigs into Re-

V
publicans

publicans they can neither of them have any business there.

It is the glory of the present reign that the door of St. James's has been thrown open to honest men of either party. In fact, there ought to be some of both near the throne ; the one party to prevent the sovereign from yielding up, thro' deception or timidity, his own essential rights ; and the other to prevent his being tempted thro' ambition to invade those of his people.

In every mixt government, like ours, there must be two such parties as we are speaking of ; and a wise monarch, who knows that his own rights and those of his people mutually support each other, will

naturally

naturally be a compound of both. *
 It is a mistake to say that the House of Hanover was established on Whig-principles---It was established on *general constitutional* principles, which are a mixture of Whig and Tory, and which have the essence of both, exclusive of Jacobitism on the one side, and Republicanism on the other. The Whigs indeed brought about the Revolution, but the Tories modified it; and since that, the Whigs have kept out a

* His present majesty is as much a whig in every good sense of the word as any man in his dominions, of which the concessions under the nullum tempus, and Grenville acts, &c. and especially the renunciation of the power of the crown over the judges are incontestible proofs.

Popish Tyrant, and the Tories have kept out a still more tyrannical Republic, or Aristocrac y.

A due contention, and equipoise of the above parties, which are essential to the constitution, must be kept up in the nation at large, but especially in the House of Commons, or we are utterly undone. It is a grand and capital error to suppose that the Commons, because appointed by the people, are the guardians of their rights only, and not equally so of the rights of the crown. They are chosen by both parties, and ought to partake of the spirit of both.

A sense of the dangerous violence too natural to contending parties will induce moderate men to
form

form an independent corps of observation, so that tho' interest or prejudice will bias many, yet supposing one third of the House of Commons to be influenced by government (no matter how), and another third by opposition, will not this throw the balance where it ought to be, that is, into the hands of the independent party? This parliamentary constitution we now possess, and may preserve, if we will avoid innovations. Our political safety then does not depend upon whether a few decayed burroughs *

* Permit me to say a word or two on the fashionable outcry of the present year. Small burroughs may be favourable, nay possibly necessary, to the maintaining of the above *balance* — if so, to destroy them
would

continue to send members, but whether we can keep up this due *equilibrium* in the senate. Let me here repeat † That “ every honest man would be to destroy ourselves. At least, they may, under proper regulations, be serviceable, by admitting men of genius and abilities, who may not have sufficient county or city interest. The members returned by the lords of Newton or Old Sarum, represent me, and every individual in the empire, as truly (and why not as honestly and as ably ?) as those chosen in London or in Yorkshire. But no man it seems is *free*, that has not a vote — this is so far from true, that many avoid being electors that they may preserve their freedom. — Hence then we are told every *individual* should have a vote — even the poor intellects of those whose heads are meant to be set a madding by this device, may surely be capable of discovering it’s absurdity.

† See above p. 102.

should

should oppose whatever party seems likely to gain an undue ascendancy." The steersman, and rowers will be unable to save the political vessel if the passengers refuse to *trim*. †

But there is still, Sir, an heavier accusation against you, for by saying That "nothing so completely disqualifies a man for the community of the blessed as a fac-

† This digression will, I hope, be excused when it is considered that we are threatened with some of the most ruinous, as well as the most plausible innovations that ever the heart of man conceived. Could I presume that these, and other such reflections, systematically established, could conduce to the preservation of my country, they should be heartily at it's service. For my own part I am by no means a *Michael Cassio* a good arithmetician, so that I should never think of computing politics by the new-fashioned algebraical method.

tious and turbulent disposition " you have shut, it seems, " the gates of heaven also against the Whigs, the Revolutionists, and even against St. Paul and the Apostles, because they turned the world upside down." Are then the Whigs factious and turbulent? Were our glorious deliverers under King William factious and turbulent? I will undertake to prove that they were the very reverse. But as to St. Paul and the Apostles, it is surely amazing that any one could be ignorant that what is here said of them was the malicious slander of their enemies, frequently disclaimed, and as frequently disproved.

As to those disturbers of common wealths, who would destroy the equipoise of states, and who sow
the

the seeds of discontent, that they may themselves reap the harvest of confusion, --- how their lot will be cast in a future being is what it more behoves them to consider than us to say. * Sir Robert Filmer admits, That a Tyrant cannot be

* “ This I am sure, whoever, either ruler or subject, by force (fraud, declamation, &c.) goes about to invade the rights of either prince or people, and lays the foundation for *overturning* the constitution and frame of *any just government*, is highly guilty of the greatest crime, I think, a man is capable of, being to answer for all those mischiefs of blood, rapin, and desolation, which the breaking to pieces of governments brings on a country. And he who does it, is justly to be esteemed the common enemy and pest of mankind, and is to be treated accordingly.” Mr. Locke, § 230.

X

saved

saved in a future state: Shall we then become more abject flatterers of the people, and their demagogues, than he dared to be even of kings? — O fye, fye, --- No!

After so long a neglect, Sir, I fear I shall be able to pay *you* but little attention under the present article. The extremes of *your* party are as reprehensible as those of the other, tho' in the present juncture not quite so alarming. In a Disquisition, otherwise just and beautiful, you have yourself deviated into party, * tho' not so much as your

* I shall have occasion in my next to address you on the liberty of the subject, which may be an apology for my saying so little about it here.

Answerer

Answerer; and of this it now becomes proper that I should produce an instance or two. To say that governments in general are the offspring of force or fraud is what I can by no means allow; they owe their origin, under Providence, to the nature of man and a sort of instinctive exertion of human prudence for the regulation of this necessary condition. *It is not good for man to be alone*, and if not alone, it is unnatural for him to be without subordination. ‡ Many revolutions

‡ Whenever the lowest of the people, have been enabled, for their sins, not to correct, but to overturn a government, they have almost always erected a greater tyranny in it's stead. Such a *posture* of affairs is to the body politic, as standing on the head is to the body natural; one part or other must still be uppermost.

and present establishments have been owing to force or fraud, but these are not the origin of governments.

Because we know of no *original* rights which men had to give up, you argue, that "Compacts are repugnant to the nature of government, whose essence † is compulsion." This is far from being true, for no sooner were there in the world the first rudiments of government; but there were the rudiments of civil liberty also: these are twin-brothers, and if one in some countries oppresses the other it is unnatural and base.

† It is essential to government to dispense honours and rewards, as well as punishments; and, like the fairy, it must not always be supposed to pinch and bite, but sometimes to drop a tester in the shoe.

To

To say that the essence of government is compulsion, is an alarming sentence. This would be distributing the world into conquered provinces, which is an idea at which every generous mind, especially that of an Englishman, † revolts with horror. The truth is, that every government is by the very nature of things armed with a kind of internal compulsion to support its own authority, and restrain offend-

† Bishop Burnet in a pastoral letter A. D. 1589, having slightly mentioned the right of conquest amongst other rights of his patron, both houses took the alarm, and voted it to be burnt by the common hangman. Some influence however seems to have been gained to the votes in the lower house, by a pun on the author's name, the younger members calling out, "Oh! *burn it, burn it*, to be sure."

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ers, according to written laws ; but then it does not support itself by force in despite of the good and orderly part of the community, for whenever *they* are set against it there is a certainty that it has perverted the ends of it's institution.

You say “ Every governor is in the situation of a goaler, whose very office arises from the criminality of those over whom he presides ; these sometimes suffer much from the abuse of his power, but they would suffer more from their mutual ill-usage if unrestrained. ” Here your satire is too general to be just : the magistrate is appointed not to restrain *all*, but to defend the good and virtuous from those who are void of principle.

In

In conclusion let me particularly remark, That it is not from the “superior wisdom of our neighbours,” but from the extreme encreasing wickedness of this nation, that we are to apprehend the most fatal consequences. If we look to the first cause of the fall of empires, it will not be found to be the power of external nor the artifice of internal enemies, but the wrath of an offended Deity † at the national defection from that King whose title is *supreme* and everlasting:

What the present prospect is I am shocked to think, and unable

† On this momentous subject let me earnestly recommend the perusal of an excellent sermon preached by Dr. Horne at an assizes at Oxford in 1775, and entitled “The providence of God manifested in the rise and fall of empires.”

to

to describe. Nothing I fear but a national reformation can preserve us long ! Our astonishing dissoluteness of morals and neglect of sacred things ; our extreme hatred and animosities, our intolerable commercial impositions, and very great private (tho' not public) tyrannies and oppressions, &c. &c. these are the *Helen* thro' whose detention our political Troy will be in danger of burning ; so that I fear we may too well apply to our own situation the warning of the Prophets,

“ Cry, Trojans, cry ! a Helen and a woe :

“ Cry, cry ! Troy burns, or else let Helen go.” *

* *Troilus and Cressida*, Act II. Sc. 2.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME,

On his Disquisition respecting "Religious
Establishments."

SIR,

AS we have now travelled together through such a variety of real and unreal tracks, not perhaps without some degree of mutual satisfaction, may I not indulge a hope, that having shewn myself by no means disinclined to praise, I shall experience a more favorable attention, should I be under the less pleasing necessity of finding fault.

Y

Govern-

“ Government, ” as you well observe on the present subject, “ has nothing to do with men’s religion, if men’s religion had nothing to do with government. ” How cruelly then were the first Christians treated by the Roman Emperors in return for their unshaken loyalty ? But Christianity, we are told † was intolerant of the established religion. It was no more so than from the nature of things it was under a necessity of being --- as well might the sun be blamed for being intolerant of darkness. ‡ Had the first Christians commenced Iconoclasts --- had the heathen temples been invaded by them, as some chapels

† Gibbon’s Hist. of the Decline, &c. Ch. 14.

‡ II. Cor. vi. 14, &c.

have

and meetings have been in modern days, the legislature would have been justifiable in the use of wholesome severity, but this was far from being the case ; they only besought men to turn from such vanities ; their conduct was truly peaceable, charitable, and disinterested ; they had no more a wish to injure the craft of Demetrius than the authority of Cæsar.

This may serve to shew us what is, and ever must be, the genuine spirit of Christianity ; and what you next observe, viz. that “ men do not quarrel with each other for their belief in speculative doctrines, but because such doctrines are signals of some party, adverse to their interests or ambition ” may

sufficiently exculpate religion from being the real cause of those wars and massacres which have been laid to her charge by the philosopher of Ferney.

Christianity, compleat and excellent as it is, does not however seem intended to appear to every one simply and uniformly the same; all men think the rainbow beautiful, tho' no two see it in the same point of view. The mind of man is infinitely various, and always more or less corrupt; and religion from it's own nature must be in some parts awfully obscure: Hence then those divisions among christians which were neither unintended, nor unforgotten, *“ There must be also heresies amongst you, that they which are approved*

proved may be made manifest amongst you." *

It is but too true, I fear, that such sects in the present state of things, could not long subsist peaceably together, did not government espouse and establish some one amongst them in preference to the rest: much less I apprehend would it be possible, according to the idea of Chillingworth, to establish the bible at large as the religion of protestants, which would in fact be making as many sects as individuals. That a national church then must be established, with tests and subscriptions, seems unavoidable; and the duty of conformity obviously arises from the benefits of union,

* 1 Cor. xi, 19.

and

and the rights of a majority to bind a minority ; but we must beware, lest we push this duty too far, by which it would end in a reflection on the reformation itself. The duty of conformity is certainly great, but the duty of toleration is still greater : when sects which are tolerated continue struggling for power, they discover that they are not truly christian, but an establishment which adopts persecution becomes completely heathenist.

I hope and trust that what you say of sects and dissenters is too harsh and severe, since, in general you represent them as restless and implacable enemies to government, and as “ observing a constant *routine* of imploring toleration, claiming equality

lity, and struggling for superiority " though, if they would confine themselves to speculation only, you allow that they might be " pious and honest men, laudably tenacious of opinions, to which they are answerable to God alone." But why must dissenters be always enemies to government? because, you say, " it patronizes a profession which they *must* look upon as false and *impious*." To this, I doubt not, these gentlemen will thank me for giving a decided negative. *Impious*, Sir, is a word which we do not now apply even to Popery itself, and notwithstanding the black catalogue of former superstitions, yet no intelligent protestant, I hope at present, looks on different sects in any other
light

light than as being comparatively ineligible.

From what remains of this Disquisition we might be tempted to suspect, that you set up your establishment for no other purpose but to shew your ingenuity in pulling it to pieces --- "Extend," you say, the comprehension ever so widely, it will exclude many pious and worthy persons, who are tenacious of different principles, and narrow it to any degree, it will still admit all those who have none." You are however, for admitting such as have no principle, on account of the assistance they may render to the state; since, though they are not so good men, they may be better subjects." Whether you refer to the unprincipled

though a bad man, and devoid of religious principles. Suppose then we were to accommodate such a *good* irreligious, unprincipled king, with a set of your equally *good* irreligious, unprincipled subjects, since, by supposition, there would be no real faith, honor, honesty, or public spirit on either side, this would doubtless give rise to a most enchanting *Utopia*; which I must leave those who have more leisure and fancy than myself to depict in proper colors.

The imperfections and corruptions of all established religions are obvious and undeniable; but then it is highly necessary to make a distinction between human establishments and Christianity itself. Estab-
lish

blishments, being both fabricated, and carried on by men, must necessarily be imperfect in their constitution, and corrupt in their administration, but Christianity, which is framed and administered by God himself, must be a *perfect and undefiled law*.

Thus far, Sir, we are nearly agreed, but the distinction which you presently make, with respect to liberty, (to which inestimable blessing I am as truly and zealously attached as Mr. Locke himself, though I cannot altogether agree with him as to it's origin and extent); this distinction, I say, must not be so lightly and easily passed over. "Mankind," it seems, "are always to be considered in a two-

fold capacity, as individuals, and as members of society." As individuals of a general species you allow us the greatest liberty imaginable, for as such we are free, equal and independent; but you give the magistrate an unlimited controul over us, as members of society, for in this capacity, obedience to our superiors is an *indispensible* duty. Now the difficulty here whether intended or accidental, consists in the ambiguity of the word *individual*. If you mean unconnected individuals in a fanciful state of nature, your position may be true in theory, but impossible in practice, since we never can *be*, and consequently never can *act*, in such a state; but if you refer to a man as an individual in
social

social common life, with respect to his neighbours, in contradistinction to a member of society, with respect to the magistrate, your position is not true, for there he is no less seriously bound by his duty to his neighbour, than by his duty to his king. The same reasoning you apply to religious liberty, in order to shew that in their public characters men *must* conform whether their consciences will let them or not. What then is the sum of this liberty which you have been pleased to allow us? It amounts to the most absolute freedom with respect to a state which we never can be in, and an absolute slavery with respect to that in which we are.

The extremes of liberty or slavery were not made for man; the perfection

fection of earthly states is legal government, where he is free to do good but not to do evil. Your alarming, and truly censurable position, that we are not free as members of society, is, as I hope I have already proved, † the very reverse of the truth. The only true and substantial liberty is what we enjoy by being citizens, since this renders us capable of rights and privileges, with which a state of nature is unacquainted even in idea.

We now seem to be arrived at the *dénouement* or unravelling of the plot, in which the artful management of a fable chiefly consists. But surely we have here the princi-

* Page 131, &c.

pal character shifted upon us, since, instead of an establishment, Christianity itself is now brought upon the stage in *propria personâ* --- But to drop my metaphor, though you professed this to be a Disquisition on “religious establishments” yet from hence to the end of it you have chosen openly to attack Christianity, as incompatible with the occupations of mankind, and totally unfit for general use.

“It is remarkable” you say “that Christianity *constantly* addresses us as men, *never* as citizens; the *only* duty it requires of us under that character is submission to power in general, but (it) prescribes *no* rules for our political conduct.” This sentence is both obscure and contra-

tradiçtory. You seem to mean that Christianity gives us particular rules for our private, but only general ones for our public conduct. I shall consider both these ideas in their turns, and first for the political.

If religion enjoins one political duty, viz. that of submission, how can it be said *never* to address us as citizens? To expect that particular directions should be found in it, which might apply to the English, French, or German constitutions, would surely be entertaining a very mean, and contracted idea of a catholic system. It's canon however includes a Levitical law, which is particular enough, and which bids much fairer than
any

any state-of-nature-compacts, to be looked upon as the general source of human jurisprudence.

There cannot be a stronger mark of the divine energy, than for a law to be universal without being particular; and this is so much the case with regard to the well-known injunctions of Christianity on this head, that I own I am unable to conceive a standard of political duty more perfect, and universally applicable.

By saying Christianity *never* addresses us as citizens, you have perhaps unknowingly, paid it a great compliment. Had the gospel been a forgery, and it's first preachers intended to set up, or favour some particular government, it is utterly

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inconceivable that it could have been so sparing in it's political directions. Other religions have been plainly adapted to the setting up of caliphs, popes, or lamas; and Paganism, which began with idolizing dead kings, at last blasphemously proceeded to pay divine honors to the living.

But the chief difficulty consists in your assertion, (though in the teeth of the thirty-seventh article) that Christianity is absolutely incompatible with the carrying on of war.* This war, alas! is one of the four forejudgments in the hand of God,† and we can no more expect that

* This question is learnedly and elaborately discussed by Grotius de jure belli et pacis. B. I. C. 2.

† Ezekiel, xiv. 21.

Christianity should forbid it, than that it should forbid the pestilence. Unjust hostilities indeed are censured, but wars in general, and especially the defensive, are winked at for the present, and their total cessation will be one distinguishing feature of the Messiah's kingdom.* When our Saviour saw Herod marching out against a neighbouring prince, he contented himself with merely raising a parable upon this circumstance; § and when St. Paul wrought in his calling as a tent-maker, could he be certain that his work would never be made use

* James iv. 1.

§ Luke xiv, 31.

of but in the peregrinations of peaceful clans ? *

We now come to our duty as private individuals, under which character you say Christianity *constantly* addresses us. "Any one" you say, "as an individual, may pay obedience to it : to those who have little to do with the *busy occupations* of the world it is an easy task ; for those who are deeply engaged in

* Our religion is so far from being adverse to this profession, that in the armies of the later emperors there were no better foldiers than the Christians ; and indeed, whenever the spirit of it has been infused into a ship's crew, or a regiment, by conscientious commanders, they have always been known to fight the better for that very circumstance.

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the *most innocent* * of them it is extremely difficult." Here then we have a religion constantly addressing us under a character in which we can comply with not one of its precepts ! If you mean individuals, in a state of nature, it is nonsense, --- you might as well allude to a state of præexistence.

Nothing, Sir, can possibly be more dangerous or untrue than to represent Christianity as *impracticable*, or having a *spirit of inactivity*. This is so far from being the case,

* How naturally do the extremes of opposite principles bring us round to the same point of error ! You have here been led to a deduction exactly similar to the qualms of Mr. Maw-worm, in the Play, who, I think, is " a-fear'd as how it should be a sin to keep a shop. "

that

that it inculcates a spirit of industry, *be not slothful in business.* It is proverbially true that, honesty is the best policy, so that in this respect too, Christianity must be favourable, or well-adapted to the *busy occupation* of the world. You talk of the *most innocent* occupations, but are not all lawful callings innocent, if conscientiously pursued? The truth is, I fear, men will *not* act conscientiously, so that they first reject the laws of God and then find fault with them, by way of justification: surely *you* Sir, would not wish to encourage such a conduct as this.

But it may be said that Christianity requires perfection --- by no means. The rule itself as coming from God, and as intended for a stan-

standard of duty, is necessarily perfect, but it is the good meaning of the heart, and not an unerring compliance that is expected of us. If, on the other hand, our ways are become so corrupt, that they are *totally inconsistent with Christianity*, what have we to expect ? But then the fault is not in the system, but in the passions and vices of men.

Are there then, Sir, no sort of men whatsoever, who are capable of being Christians, without incurring too much inconveniency ? yes, monks, you will allow, may enjoy this enviable privilege. “It was to this opinion,” you think, “of the incompatibility of Christianity, with the business of the world, that monasteries owed their origin ;” though,
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in that case, one should suppose the busy would have flocked into them rather than the idle. These, however, which you at first describe as a sort of heavenly asylums for devotion and religious contemplation, immediately afterwards become “nothing better than retreats for laziness, and seminaries of superstition and vice.

Quo teneam vultum mutantem Protea nodo?
And yet all this story seems to amount to no more than, that were good men to go into monasteries, they would be good sort of places, and vice versa.

I must own, Sir, that I was amazed at finding a person of your penetration representing these scenes of religious mummary as “favourable to the genuine spirit of our
reli-

religion," and "conducive to the practice of *every* Christian virtue ;" Christian virtues ! --- what then do you suppose them to be ? Contemplation and prayer, I own, are of the number, but these are so naturally obvious, that they are practised under all religions. All this, Sir, is owing to your not perceiving that Christianity is an *active*, and a *social* system --- that it is chiefly conversant in the busy, the interesting, and affecting scenes of life --- that it is the religion, not of monsters, but of men, --- not of the monk, (for he has so little to do with any body, that the religion of Congo might serve for him) but of the monarch, the subject, the statesman, the merchant, the rich man,

the poor man, in short, of every possible situation in life, whose respective duties it's spiritual influence is adapted to pervade, even to the dividing in funder the hearts and reins. --- What? "charity carried to a higher degree in a cloister than in an other situation"! in a place where there are neither passions, nor temptations to be withstood, nor distresses to be relieved, Christianity then would there be the most excellent where there are no objects nor occasions to call it forth. If solitude and meditation be the essence of religion, why not instance in the hermit? and on this ground you may shew with great effect, in some future Disquisition, that Elijah, while on mount Carmel, was much better
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employed than all the rest of the Prophets and Apostles put together.

Having thus, Sir, after rendering Christianity a dead letter, provided for it's decent interment in a cloister, and appointed your monks to sing a requiem to it's soul, you pronounce it's funeral oration, which is by no means in a style of panegyric.

“ It is so *adverse* to the nature of man ” --- How unfortunate is this ? what was before adverse to our reason † is now become so to our nature too. Is it credible then that the same Almighty Being which formed both the nature of man, and the system which was to correct and me-

† See page 110.

liorate it, should have made them adverse to each other? No man can distinguish with a more critical acumen than yourself whenever you think proper, how strange then that you should have here jumbled and confounded together vice in the abstract with the human heart, or the corruptions of our nature with the nature itself; as well might you have taken the disease and the constitution for one and the same thing. Physic is adverse indeed to the malady, but by no means so to the constitution.

But "Christianity is so improper for the purpose of it's establishment" --- On this head enough has been said already. I shall only observe that you are here graciously pleased
to

to acknowledge that it is less improper than any other religion; and that as some one or other *must* be established as a state-engine, one may as well have a true as a false one: “nor will any one,” you think, “suppose it preferable to establish Paganism, or Mahometanism, and *lay Christianity by for private use.*” !

“Mere Deism,” as you seem to regret, “never can be established” what a pity ! But pray, Sir, what is mere Deism, for you are probably better acquainted with it than myself ? If I might hazard a conjecture I should suppose it to consist in the getting rid of every kind of religion, except what clings so fast to the nature of man, that it cannot
be

be shaken off by the most determined efforts of our new-fangled philosophers. This, I suspect, is no inadequate idea of *mere* Deism; but permit me to observe, that it seems evident, that he who *merely* says in his heart there is a God, is *merely* not a fool.

Having noticed how *adverse* and *improper* a system Christianity is, you come lastly to represent it as *imperfect*. In your concluding document, as the result of all your enquiries, you instruct us that, “as members of political communities, we are bound to accept it *with all it's imperfections*, though, as individuals, we ought always to approach as near to it's original purity as our own imperfections will permit.”

Here

Here, I am afraid, after blaming the Rationalist for degrading religion,† you have yourself sunk it even *below* the standard of human reason, since your own reason has been able to discover so many imperfections in it.

But how did this original purity become contaminated? By the using, you say, --- by it's worldly connections --- by it's being established, and consequently corrupted. Can then the vices of any nation or individual affect or alter the internal holiness of the word of God? Will his laws become different by being differently obeyed? No, Sir, as soon shall the batteries of infidelity be enabled to dismount the smallest of it's evidences, as the vices of

mankind to pollute or contaminate the most familiar of its precepts.

The same *illusion* we see still haunts us to the last. Had you said that we ought as citizens to accept the hierarchy with all its imperfections, it would have been something; but here lies the indispensable distinction: The nature of man, and consequently human establishments must be imperfect; the nature of God, and consequently Christianity must be perfect.

But may not God, it may be said, make a thing imperfect if he pleases? In one sense no doubt he may and does; but then we may observe that such imperfection is in fact a perfection, because purposely suited to the nature of the thing; this
then

then is an effect, not of weakness, but of wisdom in the Divine Artificer. If Judaism was left imperfect, this was openly declared, and was essential to it's being introductory to a future and more glorious system, whereas it is no inconsiderable argument for the perfection of this latter, that it appeals to nothing beyond itself, but to it's own final completion and establishment.

Christianity is so far from having been sullied or eclipsed, that it daily acquires new brightness, from the expositions of the learned, and the fruitless attacks of it's enemies ; and it may not, perhaps, be destined to acquire it's full lustre, till the second coming of the Messiah, un-

der whose reign, it is possible, it may be *established*, if I may so say, in it's perfection, and practised in it's purity.

In short, Sir, after what has been argued on this last great subject of our enquiry, you will not, I hope, want any further inducement to *amend* your own conclusion, and join with me in substituting in the room of it, that character of the Christian system, as drawn by an eminent divine, which is far more just, and applicable to the present train of reasoning, namely "that as well in PERFECTION as in PURITY, as well in PUBLIC USE as in PRIVATE, it is truly worthy of the original it assumes."

F I N I S.

Turner, Baptist N.

Candid suggestions in eight letters to Soame Jenyns ; on the respective subjects of his disquisitions lately published ; with some remarks on the answerer of his seventh disquisition, respecting the principles of Mr. Locke

[London] 1782

Ph.sp. 875

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